

# ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

No. 242.]

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, 1863.

[PRICE 2d.

## VERY HARD CASH.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IT IS NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

### CHAPTER LII.

BOTH the parted lovers were wretched. Julia never complained, but drooped, and read The Psalms, and Edward detected her in tears over them. He questioned her and obtained a lame account; she being more bent on screening Alfred than on telling the truth.

So he called on the other; and found him disconsolate, and reading a Heathen philosopher for comfort, and finding none. Edward questioned him, and he was reserved, and even sulky. Sir Imperturbable persisted quietly, and he exploded, and out came his wrongs. Edward said he was a pretty fellow: and wanted it all his own way. "Suppose my mother, with her present feelings, was to take a leaf out of your book, and use all her power; where would you be then? Come, old fellow, I know what love is, and one of us *shall* have the girl he loves, unless any harm should come to my poor father owing to your blunder—oh, that would put it out of the question, I feel—but let us hope better. I pulled you out of the fire, and somehow I seem to like you better than ever after that; let me pull you out of this mess, too."

"Pull away," cried the impetuous youth. "I'll trust you with my life: ay, with more than my life, with my love; for you are the man for me: reason is always uppermost with you:

Give me the man that is not passion's slave  
And I will wear him in my heart's core, ay——"

"Oh bother that. If you are in earnest, don't mough, but put on your hat and come over."

He assented; but in the middle of putting on his coat, made this little observation: "Now I see how wise the ancients were: yes, friendship is better than love; calmer, more constant, free from the heats and chills of that impetuous passion; its pure bosom is ruffled by none of love's jealousies and irritabilities. *Solem e mundo tollunt qui tollunt amicitiam.*"

"Oh, bother quoting; come and shake hands with Julia." They went over; Mrs. Dodd was in the City. Edward ushered in Alfred, saying "here is the other Impetuosity;" and sagely retired for a few minutes: when he came back they were sitting hand in hand, he gazing on her,

she inspecting the carpet. "That is all right," said Edward drily: "now the next thing is, you must go back to Oxford directly, and read for your first class."

The proposal fell like a blight upon the reconciled lovers. But Edward gave potent reasons. The delays of law were endless: Alfred's defendant had already obtained one postponement of the trial on frivolous grounds. Now the Oxford examination and Doncaster races come on at a fixed date, by a Law of Nature, and admit of no "postponement swindle." "You mark my words, you will get your class before you will get your trial, and it won't hurt you to go into court a first-class man: will it? And then you won't quarrel by letter, you two; I know. Come will you do what I tell you: or is friendship but a name? eh, Mr. Bombast?" He ended with great though quiet force: "Come, you two, which is better, to part like the scissors, or part like the thread?"

Similes are no arguments; and perhaps that is why they convince people so: Alfred capitulated to the scissors and thread; and only asked with abnormal humility to be allowed to taste the joys of reconciliation for two days: the third found him at Oxford; he called on the head of his college to explain what had prevented his return to Exeter in the October term twelve months ago, and asked for rooms. Instead of siding with a man of his own college so cruelly injured, the dignitary was alarmed by the bare accusation, and said he must consider. Insanity was a terrible thing.

"So is false accusation, and so is false imprisonment," said Hardie bitterly.

"Unquestionably. But I have at present no means of deciding how far those words apply." In short, he could give no answer; must consult the other officers, and would convey the result by letter.

Alfred's pride was deeply mortified, not less by a certain cold repugnant manner than by the words. And there came over his heart a sickening feeling that he was now in the eyes of men an intellectual leper.

He went to another college directly, and applied to the vice-president; the vice-president sent him with a letter to the dean; the dean looked frightened, and told him hesitatingly the college was full; he might put his name

down, and perhaps get in next year. Alfred retired, and learned from the porter that the college was not full. He sighed deeply, and the sickening feeling grew on him; an ineradicable stigma seemed upon him, and Mrs. Dodd was no worse than the rest of the world then; every mother in England would approve her resolution. He wandered about the scenes of his intellectual triumphs: he stood in the great square of the schools, a place ugly to unprejudiced eyes, but withal somewhat grand and inspiring, especially to scholars who have fought their keen, though bloodless, battles there. He looked at the windows and gilt inscription of the Schola Metaphysicæ, in which he had met the scholars of his day and defeated them for the Ireland. He wandered into the theatre, and eyed the rostrum, whence he had not mumbled, but recited, his Latin prize poem with more than one thunder of academic applause: thunder compared with which Drury Lane's is a mere cracker. These places were unchanged; but he, sad scholar, wandered among them as if he was a ghost, and all these were stony phantoms of an intellectual past, never, never, to return.

He telegraphed Sampson and Edward to furnish him with certificates that he had never been insane, but the victim of a foul conspiracy; and, when he received them, he went with them to St. Margaret's Hall; for he had bethought him that the new principal was a first-rate man, and had openly vowed he would raise that "refuge for the oft-times ploughed" to a place of learning.

Hardie called, sent in his card, and was admitted to the principal's study. He was about to explain who he was, when the doctor interrupted him, and told him politely he knew him by reputation. "Tell me rather," said he, shrewdly, "to what I owe this application from an undergraduate so distinguished as Mr. Hardie?"

Then Alfred began to quake, and, instead of replying, put a hand suddenly before his face and lost courage for one moment.

"Come, Mr. Hardie," said the principal, "don't be disconcerted: a fault regretted is half atoned; and I am not disposed to be hard on the errors of youth; I mean where there is merit to balance them."

"Sir," said Alfred sadly, "it is not a fault I have to acknowledge, but a misfortune."

"Tell me all about it," said Dr. Alder, guardedly.

He told it, omitting nothing essential that could touch the heart or excite the ironical humour of an academician.

"Well 'truth is more wonderful than fiction,'" said the doctor. And I conclude the readers of this tale are all of the doctor's opinion; so sweet to the mind is cant.

Alfred offered his certificates.

Now Dr. Alder had been asking himself in what phrases he should decline this young genius, who was sane now, but of course had been mad,

only had forgotten the circumstance. But the temptation to get an Ireland scholar into his Hall suddenly overpowered him. The probability that he might get a first-class in a lucid interval was too enticing; nothing venture, nothing have. He determined to venture.

"Mr. Hardie," said he, "this house shall always be open to good morals and good scholarship while I preside over it, and it shall be open to them all the more when they come to me dignified and made sacred by 'unmerited calamity.'"

Now this fine speech, like Minerva herself, came from the head: Alfred was overcome by it to tears. At that the doctor's heart was touched, and even began to fancy it had originated that noble speech.

It was no use doing things by halves; so Dr. Alder gave Alfred a delightful set of rooms; and made the Hall pleasant to him. He was rewarded by a growing conviction that he had made an excellent acquisition. This opinion, however, was anything but universal: and Alfred, finding the men of his own college suspected his sanity, and passed jokes behind his back, cut them all dead, and confined himself to his little Hall. There they petted him, and crowded about him, and betted on him for the schools as freely as if he was a colt the Hall was going to enter for the Derby.

He read hard, and judiciously, but without his old confidence: he became anxious and doubtful; he had seen so many first-rate men just miss a first class. The brilliant creature analysed all his Aristotelian treatises, and wrote the synopses clear with marginal references on great pasteboard cards three feet by two, and so kept the whole subject before his eye, till he obtained a singular mastery. Same system with the historians: nor did he disdain the use of coloured inks. Then the brilliant creature drew lists of all the hard words he encountered in his reading, especially in the common books, and read these lists till mastered. The stake was singularly heavy in his case, so he guarded every crevice.

And at this period he was not so unhappy as he expected. The laborious days went swiftly, and twice a week at least came a letter from Julia. Oh how his grave academic room with oaken panels did brighten, when her letter lay on the table. It was opened, and seemed written with sunbeams. No quarrels on paper! Absence made the heart grow fonder. And Edward came to see him, and over their wine let out a feminine trait in Julia. "When Hurd calls she walks out of the room, just as my poor mother does when you come. That is spite: since you are sent away, nobody else is to profit by it. Where is her Christianity, eh? and echo answers—Got a cigar, old fellow?" And, after puffing in silence a while, he said resignedly, "I am an unnatural monster."

"Oh, are you?" said the other serenely, for he was also under the benign influence.

"Yes," said Edward, "I am your ally; and a mere spy in the camp of those two ladies. I watch all their moves for your sake."

Alfred forgave him. And thus his whole life was changed, and for nearly twelve months (for Dr. Alder let him reside in the Hall through the vacation) he pursued the quiet tenor of a student's life, interrupted at times by law; but that is another topic.

#### WIFE AND NO WIFE.

Mrs. Dodd was visibly shaken by that calamity which made her shrink with horror from the sight of Alfred Hardie. In the winter she was so unwell that she gave up her duties with Messrs. Cross and Co. Her connexion with them had been creditable to both parties. I believe I forgot to say why they trusted her so; well, I must tell it elsewhere. David off her hands, she was independent, and had lost the motive and the heart for severe work. She told the partners she could no longer do them justice, and left them to their regret. They then advised her to set up as a milliner, and offered her credit for goods at cash prices up to two thousand pounds: she thanked them like a sorrowful queen, and went her way.

In the spring she recovered some spirit and health: but at midsummer a great and subtle misfortune befel her. Her mind was bent on David night and day, and used to struggle to evade the laws of space, that bind its grosser companion, and find her lost husband on the sea. She often dreamt of him, but vaguely. But one fatal night she had a dream as clear as daylight, and sharp as white pebbles in the sun. She was on a large ship with guns; she saw men bring a dead sailor up the side; she saw all their faces, and the dead man's too. It was David. His face was white. A clear voice said he was to be buried in the deep next morning. She saw the deck at her feet, the breeches of the guns, so clear, so defined, that, when she awoke, and found herself in the dark, she thought reality was an illusion. She told the dream to Julia and Edward. They tried to encourage her, in vain. "I saw him," she said, "I saw him; it was a vision, not a dream: my David is dead. Well, then, I shall not be long behind him."

Dr. Sampson ridiculed her dream to her face. But to her children he told another story. "I am anxious about her," he said, "most anxious. There is no mortal ill the distempered brain may not cause. We can hear nothing of him. She will fret herself into the grave, as sure as fate, if something does not turn up."

Her children could not console her: they tried, but something hung round their own hearts, and chilled every effort. In a word, they shared her fears. How came she to see him on board a ship with guns? In her waking hours she always said he was on a merchant ship. Was it not one of those visions, which come to mortals and give them sometimes a peep into broad space, and far more rarely, a peep into futurity itself?

One day in the autumn, Alfred, being in town on law business, met what seemed the ghost of Mrs. Dodd in the streets. She saw him not; her eye was on that ghastly face she had seen in her dreams. It flashed through his mind that she would not live long to part him and Julia. But he discouraged the ungenerous thought; almost forgave her repugnance to himself, and felt it would be worse than useless to ask Julia to leave her mother, who was leaving her visibly.

But her horror of him was anything but softened; and she used to tell Dr. Sampson she thought the sight of that man would kill her now. Edward himself began to hope Alfred would turn his affections elsewhere. The house in Pembroke-street was truly the house of mourning now; all their calamities were light compared with this.

#### THE DISTRICT VISITOR.

While Julia was writing letters to keep up Alfred's heart, she was very sad herself. Moreover he had left her for Oxford but a very few days, when she received an anonymous letter: her first. It was written in a female hand, and couched in friendly and sympathetic terms. The writer thought it only fair to warn her that Mr. Alfred Hardie was passionately fond of a lady in the asylum, and had offered her marriage. If Miss Dodd wished to be deceived, let her burn this letter and think no more of it: if not, let her insert this advertisement in the Times: "The whole Truth.—L. D.," and her correspondent would communicate particulars by word or writing.

What a barbed and poisoned arrow is to the body was this letter to Julia's mind. She sat cold as a stone with this poison in her hand. Then came an impetuous impulse to send it down to Alfred, and request him to transfer the other half of his heart to his lady of the asylum. Then she paused; and remembered how much unjust suspicion had been levelled at him already. What right had she to insult him? She would try and keep the letter to herself. As to acting upon it, her good sense speedily suggested it came from the rival in question, real or supposed. "She wants to make use of me," said Julia; "it is plain Alfred does not care much for her; or why does she come to me?" She put the letter in her desk, and it rankled in her heart. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.* She trembled at herself: she felt a savage passion had been touched in her. She prayed day and night against jealousy.

But I must now, to justify my heading, skip some months, and relate a remarkable incident that befel her in the said character. On the first of August in this year, a good Christian woman, one of her patients, asked her to call on Mr. Barkington, that lodged above. "He is a decent body, miss, and between you and me, I think his complaint is, he don't get quite enough to eat."

"Barkington!" said Julia, and put her hand to her bosom. She went and tapped at his door.

"Come in," said a shrillish voice.

She entered, and found a weazened old man seated, mending his own coat.

He rose, and she told him she was a district visitor. He said he had heard of her; they called her the beautiful lady in that court. This was news to her, and made her blush. She asked leave to read a chapter to him; he listened as to some gentle memory of childhood. She prescribed him a glass of port wine, and dispensed it on the instant. Thus physicked, her patient became communicative, and chattered on about his native place—but did not name it—and talked about the people there. Now our district visitor was, if the truth must be told, a compounder. She would permit her pupils to talk about earthly affairs, on condition they would listen to heavenly ones before she went. So she let this old man run on, and he told her he had been a banker's clerk all his life, and saved a thousand pounds, and come up to London to make his fortune on the Stock Exchange; and there he was sometimes a bull, and sometimes a bear, and, whichever he was, certain foxes called brokers and jobbers got the profit and he the loss. "It's all the same as a gambling table," said he. "The jobbers and brokers have got the same odds the bank has at Rouge et Noir, and the little capitalist like me is doomed beforehand." Then he told her that there was a crossing-sweeper near the Exchange who came from his native place, and had started as a speculator, and come down to that, only he called it rising, and used to speak with a shudder of when he dabbled in the funds, and often told him to look sharp and get a crossing. And lo! one day when he was cleaned out and desperate, and hovering with the other ghosts of little capitalists about the tomb of their money, he saw his countryman fall flat, and the broom fly out of his hand. Instantly he made a rush, and so did a wooden-legged sailor; but he got first to the broom, and began to sweep while others picked up his countryman, who proved dead as a herring; and he succeeded to his broom, and it made money by the Exchange, though he never could: still, one day he picked up a pocket-book in that neighbourhood, with a lump of money, which he straightway advertised in—no newspapers. And now Julia thought it time to interpose the eighth commandment, the golden rule, and such branches of learning.

He became a favourite of hers: he had so much to say: she even thought she had seen his face before: but she could not tell where. She gave him good books and tracts; and read to him, and ploughed his heart with her sweet voice, and sowed the good seed in the furrows—seed which, like wheat or other grain, often seems to fall flat and die, but comes out green after many days.

One Saturday she invited him to dine with the servants next day. He came during church-time, and went away in the afternoon while she was with her mother. But she asked Sarah, who proved eager to talk about him. "He was a rum customer; kep' asking questions all dinner-

time. 'Well,' says I, 'you're good company, you are; be you a lawyer? for you examines us; but you don't tell us nothing.' Ye see, miss, Jane she is that simple, she was telling him everything, and about Mr. Alfred's lawsuit with his father and all."

Julia said that was indiscreet; but after all what did it matter?

"Who knows, miss?" Sarah replied: "least said is soonest mended. If you please, miss, who is he? Where does he bide? Where does he come from? Does he know Hardies?"

"I should think not. Why?"

"Because I'm much mistaken if he doesn't." Then putting on a stolid look, she asked. "Does he know your papa?"

"Oh no, Sarah. How should he?"

"There now," said Sarah: "miss, you are all in the dark about this old man: I'll tell you something; I took him out of the way of Jane's temper when she began a dishing up, and I had him into the parlour a minute; and in course there he sees the picture of your poor papa hung up. Miss, if you'll believe me, the moment he claps eyes on that there picture, he halloes out, and out goes his two hands like this here. 'It's him!' says he; 'it's him!' and stares at the picture like a stuck pig. Forgot I was close behind him, I do believe. 'She's his daughter,' says he in a whisper, a curious whisper; seemed to come out of his stomach. 'What's the matter now?' says I, just so. He gave a great start, as if my speaking had wakened him from a dream, and, says he, 'Nothing,' as quiet as a lamb. 'Nothing isn't much,' says I, just so. 'It usedn't to be anything at all when I was your age,' says he, sneerin'. But I paid him in good coin; says I 'Old man, where you comes from do the folks use to start and hallo out, and cry 'It's him! she's his daughter!' and fling their two arms abroad like a windmill in March, and all for—nothing?' So at that he changed as white as my smock, and fell all of a tremble. However, at dinner he perks up, and drew that poor simple Jane out a good one. But he didn't look towards me much, which I set opposite to watch my lord."

"Sarah," said Julia, "this is really curious, mysterious; you are a good, watchful, faithful girl; and, to tell the truth, I sometimes fancy I have seen Mr. Barkington's face; however, I will solve this little mystery to-morrow; for I will ask him: thank you, Sarah."

On Monday she called on Mr. Barkington to solve the mystery. But, instead of solving, her visit thickened it; for Mr. Barkington was gone, bag and baggage. When Edward was told of this business, he thought it remarkable, and regretted he had not seen the old man.

So do I; for it is my belief Edward would have recognised him.

DAVID DODD.

The history of a man is the history of his mind. And that is why you have heard so little of late



about the simplest, noblest, and most unfortunate of all my personages. Insanity is as various as eccentricity; I have spared the kind-hearted reader some of David's vagaries; however, when we parted with him, he had settled into that strange phase of lunacy, in which the distant past seems nearly obliterated, and memory exists, but revolves in a narrow round of things present: this was accompanied with a positive illusion—to wit, a fixed idea that he was an able seaman: and, as usual, what mental power he retained came out strongest in support of this idea. All this was marked by a bodily agility somewhat more than natural in a man of his age. Owing to the wind astern, he was enabled to run into Portsmouth before the steam-tug came up with him: and he did run into port, not because he feared pursuit, but because he was desperately hungry; and he had no suicidal tendencies whatever.

He made for a public-house, and called for some bread and cheese and beer; they were supplied, and then lo! he had no money to pay for them. "I'll owe you till I come back from sea, my bo," said he coolly. On this the landlord collared him, and David shook him off into the road, much as a terrier throws a rat from him; then there was a row, and a naval officer, who was cruising about for hands, came up and heard it. There was nothing at all unseamanlike in David's conduct, and the gentleman took a favourable view of it, and paid the small demand; but not with unlearned motives; he was the second lieutenant of H.M. Frigate *Vulture*; she had a bad name, thanks to her last captain, and was short of hands: he took David aside and asked him would he like to ship on board the *Vulture*.

David said yes, and suggested the foretop. "Oh yes," growled the lieutenant, "you all want to be there." He then gauged this Jacky Tar's intellects; asked him *inter alia* how to send a frigate's foretop gallant yard down upon deck: and, to show how seamanship sticks in the brain when once it gets there, David actually told him. "You are rather old," said the lieutenant, "but you are a seaman:" and so took him on board the *Vulture* at Spithead, before Green began to search the town in earnest. Nobody acts his part better than some demented persons do: and David made a very tolerable sailor, notwithstanding his forty-five years: and the sea did him good within certain limits. Between him and the past lay some intellectual or cerebral barrier as impenetrable as the great wall of China: but on the hither side of that wall his faculties improved. Of course the crew soon found out the gap in his poor brain, and called him Soft Billy, and played on him at first. But by degrees he won their affection; he was so wonderfully sweet-tempered: and besides, his mind being in an abnormal state, he loathed grog, and gave his allowance to his messmates. One day he showed an unexpected trait; they were lying becalmed in southern latitudes, and, time

hanging heavy, each whiled it how he might; one fiddled, another wrote to his Polly, another fished for sharks, another whistled for a wind, scores fell into the form of meditation without the reality, and one got a piece of yarn and amused himself killing flies on the bulwark. Now this shocked poor Billy: he put out his long arm and intercepted a stroke. "What is the row?" said the operator.

"You mustn't" said Billy solemnly, looking into his face with great dreamy eyes.

"You be —," said the other, and lent him a tap on the cheek with the yarn. Billy did not seem to mind this; his skin had little sensibility, owing to his disorder.

Jack recommenced on his flies, and the bystanders laughed. They always laughed now at everything Billy said, as Society used to laugh when the late Theodore Hook asked for the mustard at dinner; and would have laughed if he had said, "You see me sad, I have just lost my poor father."

David stood looking on at the slaughter with a helpless puzzled air.

At last he seemed to have an idea; he caught Jack up by the throat and knee, lifted him with gigantic strength above his head, and was just going to hurl him shrieking into the sea, when a dozen strong hands interfered, and saved the man. Then they were going to bind Billy hand and foot; but he was discovered to be perfectly calm; so they remonstrated instead, and presently Billy's commander-in-chief, a ship-boy called Georgy White, shoved in and asked him in a shrill haughty voice how he dared do that. "My dear," said Billy, with great humility and placidity, "he was killing God's creatures, no allowance: \* so, ye see, to save their lives, I was obliged."

At this piece of reasoning, and the simplicity and gentle conviction with which it was delivered, there was a roar. It subsided, and a doubt arose whether Billy was altogether in the wrong.

"Well," said one, "I dare say life is sweet to them little creatures, if they could speak their minds."

"I've known a ship founder in a fair breeze all along of killing 'em," said one old salt.

Finally, several sided with Billy, and intimated that "it served the lubber right for not listening to reason." And, indeed, methinks it was lovely and touching that so divine a ray of goodness and superior reason should have shot from his heart or from Heaven across that poor benighted brain.

But it must be owned his mode of showing his humanity was somewhat excessive and abnormal, and smacked of lunacy. After this, however, the affection of his messmates was not so contemptuous.

Now the captain of the *Vulture* was Billy's cousin by marriage, Reginald Bazalgette. Twenty

\* Nautical phrase, meaning without stint or limit, or niggardly admeasurement; as there is of grog.

years ago, when the captain was a boy, they were great friends: of late Bazalgette had seen less of him; still it seems strange he did not recognise him in his own ship. But one or two causes co-operated to prevent that. In the first place, the mind when turned in one direction is not so sharp in another; and Captain Bazalgette had been told to look for David in a merchant ship bound for the East Indies. In the next place, insanity alters the expression of the face wonderfully, and the captain of a frigate runs his eye over four hundred sailors at muster, or a hundred at work, not to examine their features, but their dress and bearing at the one, and their handiness at the other. The worst piece of luck was that Mrs. Dodd did not know David called himself William Thompson. So there stood "William Thompson" large as life on the ship's books, and nobody the wiser. Captain Bazalgette had a warm regard and affection for Mrs. Dodd, and did all he could. Indeed, he took great liberties: he stopped and overhauled several merchant ships for the truant; and, by-the-by, on one occasion William Thompson was one of the boat's crew that rowed a midshipman from the Vulture alongside a merchant ship to search for David Dodd: he heard the name and circumstance mentioned in the boat, but the very name was new to him. He remembered it, but only from that hour; and told his loving tyrant, Georgie White, they had been overhauling a merchant ship and looking for one David Dodd.

It was about midsummer the Vulture anchored off one of the South Sea islands, and sent a boat ashore for fruit. Billy and his dearly beloved little tyrant, Georgie White, were among the crew. Off goes Georgie to bathe, and Billy sits down on the beach with a loving eye upon him. The water was calm: but the boy, with the heedlessness of youth, stayed in it nearly an hour: he was seized with cramp and screamed to his comrades. They ran, but they were half a mile from the boat. Billy dashed into the water and came up with Georgie just as he was sinking for the last time; the boy gripped him; but by his great strength he disentangled himself and got Georgie on his shoulders, and swam for the shore. Meantime the sailors got into the boat, and rowed hastily towards them.

Now Billy was undermost and his head under water at times, and Georgie, some thought, had helped strangle him by gripping his neck with both arms. Anyway, by the boy's account, just as they were getting into shallow water, Billy gave a great shriek and turned over on his back; and Georgie paddled with his hands, but Billy soon after this sunk like a dead body while the boat was yet fifty yards off. And Georgie screamed and pointed to the place, and the boat came up and took Georgie in, and the water was so clear the sailors saw Billy lie motionless at the bottom, and hooked him with a boat-hook and drew him up: but his face came up alongside a deadly white, with staring eyes, and they shuddered and feared it was too late.

They took him into a house and stripped him, and rubbed him, and wrapped him in blankets, and put him by the hot fire. But all would not do.

Then, having dried his clothes, they dressed the body again and laid him in the boat, and cast the Union Jack over him, and rowed slowly and unwillingly back to the ship, Georgie sobbing and screaming over the body, and not a dry eye in the boat.

The body was carried up the side, and uncovered, just as Mrs. Dodd saw in her dream. The surgeon was sent for and examined the body: and then the grim routine of a man-of-war dealt swiftly with the poor skipper. He was carried below to be prepared for a sailor's grave. Then the surgeon walked aft and reported formally to the officer of the watch the death by drowning of William Thompson. The officer of the watch went instantly to the captain in his cabin and reported the death. The captain gave the stereotyped order to bury him at noon next day; and the body was stripped that night and sewed up in his hammock with a portion of his clothes and bedding to conceal the outline of the corpse, and two cannon-balls at his feet; and so the poor skipper was laid out for a watery grave, and covered by the Union Jack.

I don't know whether any of my young readers are much affected by the catastrophe I have just related. If not, I will just remind them that even Edward Dodd was prepared to oppose the marriage of Julia and Alfred, if any serious ill should befall his father at sea, owing to Alfred's imprudent interference in rescuing him from Drayton House.

#### CHAPTER LIII.

##### LAW.

MINUTE study of my fellow-creatures has revealed to me that there are many intelligent persons who think that a suit at law commences in court. This is not so. Many suits are fought and decided by the special pleaders, and so never come into court; and, as a stiff encounter of this kind actually took place in *Hardie v. Hardie*, a word of prefatory explanation may be proper. Suitors come into court only to try an issue: an issue is a mutual lie direct: and towards this both parties are driven upon paper by the laws of pleading, which may be thus summed: 1. Every statement of the adversary must either be contradicted flat, or confessed and avoided: "avoided" means neutralised by fresh matter. 2. Nothing must be advanced by plaintiff which does not disclose a ground of action at law. 3. Nothing advanced by defendant, which, if true, would not be a defence to the action. These rules exclude in a vast degree the pitiable defects and vices that mark all the unprofessional arguments one ever hears; for on a breach of any one of the said rules the other party can demur: the demurrer is argued before the judges

in Banco, and, if successfully, the faulty plea, or faulty plea, is dismissed, and often of course the cause won or lost thereby, and the country saved the trouble, and the suitors the expense, of trying an issue.

So the writ being served by plaintiff's attorney, and an appearance put in by defendant's, the paper battle began by Alfred Hardie, through his attorney, serving on defendant's attorney "THE DECLARATION." This was drawn by his junior counsel, Garrow, and ran thus, after specifying the count and the date:

**Riddlesex** Alfred Hardie by John Compton his attorney sues Thomas Hardie For that the Deft. assaulted Plt. gave him into custody to a certain person and caused him to be imprisoned for a long space of time in a certain place to wit a Lunatic Asylum whereby the Plt. was much inconvenienced and suffered much anguish and pain in mind and body and was unable to attend to his affairs and was injured in his credit and circumstances.

And the Plt. claims 5000/.

Mr. Compton conveyed a copy of this to Alfred, and said it was a beautiful declaration. "What," said Alfred, "is that all I have suffered at these miscreants' hands? Why, it is written with an icicle."

Mr. Compton explained that this was the outline; "Counsel will lay the colours on in court as thick as you like."

The defendant replied to the above declaration by three pleas.

By statute  
8 & 9 Vic.,  
c. 100, s.  
105.

1. The Deft. by Joseph Heathfield his attorney says he is not guilty.

2. And for a further Plea the Deft. says that before and at the time of the alleged imprisonment Plt. was a person of unsound mind and incompetent to take care of himself and a proper person to be taken care of and detained and it was unfit unsafe improper and dangerous that he should be at large thereupon the Deft. being the uncle of the Plt. and a proper person to cause the Plt. to be taken charge of under due care and treatment in that behalf did cause the Plt. to be so taken charge of and detained under due care and treatment, &c. &c.

The third plea was the stinger, but too long to cite *verbatim*; it went to this tune, that the plaintiff at and before the time &c. had conducted himself like a person of unsound mind &c. and two certificates that he was insane had been given by two persons duly authorised under the statute to sign such certificates, and the defendant had believed and did bona fide believe these certificates to be true, &c. &c.

The first of these pleas was a mere formal plea, under the statute.

The second raised the very issue at common law the plaintiff wished to try.

The third made John Compton knit his brows with perplexity. "This is a very nasty plea," said he to Alfred: "a regular trap. If we join issue on it we must be defeated; for how can we deny the certificates were in form; and yet the plagu' thing is not loose enough to be demurred to. Colls, who drew these pleas for them?"

"Mr. Colvin, sir."

"Make a note to employ him in our next stiff pleading."

Alfred was staggered. He had thought to ride roughshod over defendant: a common expectation of plaintiffs: but seldom realised. Lawyers fight hard. The pleas were taken to Garrow; he said there was but one course, to demur to No. 3. So the plaintiff "joined issue on all the defendant's pleas, and as to the last plea the plaintiff said the same was bad in substance." Defendant rejoined that the same was good in substance, and thus Hardie v. Hardie divided itself into two cases, a question of law for the judges, and an issue for the mixed tribunal loosely called a jury. And I need hardly say that should the plaintiff win one of them, and the defendant the other, the cause would be won by the defendant.

Postponing the history of the legal question, I shall show how Messrs. Heathfield fought off the issue, and cooled the ardent Alfred and sickened him of law.

In theory every Englishman has a right to be tried by his peers; but in fact there are five gentlemen in every court, each of whom has by precedent the power to refuse him a jury, by simply postponing the trial term after term, until the death of one of the parties, when the action, if a personal one, dies too; and, by a singular anomaly of judicial practice, if a slippery defendant can't persuade A. or B. judges of the common law court, to connive at what I venture to call

#### THE POSTPONEMENT SWINDLE,

he can actually go to C. D. and E., one after another, with his rejected application, and the previous refusal of the other judges to delay and baffle justice goes for little or nothing; so that the postponing swindler has five to one in his favour.

Messrs. Heathfield began this game unluckily. They applied to a judge in chambers for a month to plead. Mr. Compton opposed in person, and showed that this was absurd. The judge allowed them only four days to plead. Issue being joined, Mr. Compton pushed on for trial, and the cause was set down for the November term. Towards the end of the term Messrs. Heathfield applied to one of the puisné judges for a postponement, on the ground that a principal witness could not attend. Application was supported by the attorney's affidavit to the effect that Mr. Speers was in Boulogne, and had written to him to say that he had met with a railway accident, and feared he could not possibly come to England in less than a month. A respectable French doctor

confirmed this by certificate. Compton opposed, but the judge would hardly hear him, and postponed the trial as a matter of course: this carried it over the sittings into next term. Alfred groaned, but bore it patiently; not so Doctor Sampson: he raged against secret tribunals: "See how men deteriorate the moment they get out of the full light of publicity. What English judge, sitting in the light of Shortland, would admit 'Jack swears that Gill says' for legal evidence. Speers has sworn to no facts. Heathfield has sworn to no facts but th' existence of Speers's hearsay. They are a couple o' lyres. I'll bet ye ten pounds t' a shilling Speers is as well as I'm."

Mr. Compton quietly reminded him there was a direct statement—the French doctor's certificate.

"A medical certificant!" shrieked Sampson, amazed. "Mai—dearr—sirr, a medical certificant is just an article o' commerce—like an attorney's conscience. Gimme a guinea and I'll get *you* sworn sick, diseased, disabled, or dead this minute, whichever you like best."

"Come, doctor, don't fly off: you said you'd bet ten pounds to a shilling Speers is not an invalid at all. I say done."

"Done."

"How will you find out?"

"How? Why set the thief-takers on 'um, to be sure."

He wrote off to the prefect of police at Boulogne, and in four days received an answer, headed "Information in the interest of families." The prefect informed him there had been no railway accident: but that the Sieur Speers, English subject, had really hurt his leg getting out of a railway carriage six weeks ago, and had kept his room some days; but he had been cured some weeks, and going about his business, and made an excursion to Paris.

On this Compton offered him the shilling. But he declined to take it. "The lie was self-evident," said he: "and here's a judge wouldn't see't, and an attorney couldn't. Been all their lives sifting evidence too. Oh the darkness of the professional mind!"

The next term came. Mr. Compton delivered the briefs and fees, subpoenaed the witnesses, &c., and Alfred came up with a good heart to get his stigma removed by twelve honest men in the light of day; but first one case was taken out of its order and put before him, then another, till term wore near an end. Then Messrs. Heathfield applied to another judge of the court for a postponement. Mr. Richard Hardie, plaintiff's father, a most essential witness, was ill at Clare-court. Medical certificate and letter herewith.

Compton opposed. Now this judge was a keen and honourable lawyer, with a lofty hatred of all professional tricks. He heard the two attorneys, and delivered himself to this effect, only of course in better legal phrase: "I shall make no order. The defendant has been here

before on a doubtful affidavit. You know, Mr. Heathfield, juries in these cases go by the plaintiff's evidence, and his conduct under cross-examination. And I think it would not be just nor humane to keep this plaintiff in suspense, and civiliter mortuum, any longer. You can take out a commission to examine Richard Hardie."

To this Mr. Compton nailed him, but the commission took time; and while it was pending, Mr. Heathfield went to another judge with another disabled witness; Peggy Black. That naive personage was nursing her deceased sister's children—in an affidavit: and they had scarlatina—surgeon's certificate to that effect. Compton opposed, and pointed out the blot. "You don't want the children in the witness-box," said he: "and we are not to be robbed of our trial because one of your witnesses prefers nursing other people's children to facing the witness-box."

The judge nodded assent. "I make no order," said he.

Mr. Heathfield went out from his presence and sent a message by telegraph to Peggy Black. "You must have Sear. yourself, and telegraph the same at once, certificate by post."

The accommodating maiden telegraphed back that she had unfortunately taken scarlatina of the children: medical certificate to follow by post. Four judges out of the five were now awake to the move. But Mr. Heathfield tinkered the hole in his late affidavit with Peggy's telegram, and slipped down to Westminster to the chief judge of the court, who had had no opportunity of watching the growth and dissemination of disease among defendant's witnesses. Compton fought this time by counsel and with a powerful affidavit. But luck was against him. The judge had risen to go home: he listened standing; Compton's counsel was feeble; did not feel the wrong: how could he? lawyers fatten by delays of justice, as physicians do by tardy cure. The postponement was granted.

Alfred cursed them all, and his own folly in believing that an alleged lunatic would be allowed fair play at Westminster or anywhere else. Compton took snuff, and Sampson appealed to the press again. He wrote a long letter exposing with fearless irony the postponement swindle as it had been worked in *Hardie v. Hardie*: and wound up with this fiery peroration:

"This Englishman sues not merely for damages, but to recover lost rights dearer far than money, of which he says he has been unjustly robbed; his right to walk in daylight on the soil of his native land without being seized, and tied up for life like a nigger or a dog; his footing in society; a chance to earn his bread; and a place among mankind: ay, among mankind; for a lunatic is an animal in the law's eye and society's, and an alleged lunatic is a lunatic till a jury clears him.

"I appeal to you, gentlemen, is not such a suitor sacred in all wise and good men's minds? Is he not defendant as well as plaintiff? Why his stake is enormous compared with the nominal



defendant's; and, if I know right from wrong, to postpone his trial a fourth time would be to insult Divine justice, and trifle with human misery, and shock the common sense of nations."

The doctor's pen neither clipped the words nor minced the matter you see. Reading this the water came into Alfred's eyes: "Ah, staunch friend," he said, "how few are like you! To the intellectual dwarfs who conspire with my oppressors, Hardie v. Hardie is but a family squabble. *Parvis omnia parva.*" Mr. Compton read it too; and said from the bottom of his heart, "Heaven defend us from our friends! This is enough to make the courts decline to try the case at all."

And, indeed, it did not cure the evil: for next term another *malade affidavitaire* was set up. Speers to wit. This gentleman deposed to having come over on purpose to attend the trial; but, having inadvertently stepped aside as far as *Wales*, he lay there stricken with a mysterious malady, and had just strength to forward medical certificate. On this the judge, in spite of remonstrance, adjourned *Hardie v. Hardie* to the summer term. Summer came, the evil day drew nigh: Mr. Heathfield got the venue changed from Westminster to London, which was the fifth postponement. At last the cause came on: the parties and witnesses were all in court, with two whole days before them to try it in.

Dr. Sampson rushed in furious. "There is some devilry afloat," said he. "I was in the House of Commons last night, and there I saw the defendant's counsel earwigging the judge."

"Nonsense," said Mr. Compton; "such suspicions are ridiculous. Do you think they can talk of nothing but *Hardie v. Hardie*?"

"*Mai—dearr sirr—my son met one of Heathfield's clerks at dinner, and he let out that the trile was not to come off. Put this and that together now.*"

"It will come off," said Mr. Compton, "and in five minutes at furthest."

In less than that time the learned judge came in, and before taking his seat made this extraordinary speech.

"I hear this cause will take three days to try: and we have only two days before us. It would be inconvenient to leave it unfinished; and I must proceed on circuit the day after to-morrow. It must be a remanet: no man can do more than time allows."

Plaintiff's counsel made a feeble remonstrance; then yielded. And the crier with sonorous voice called on the case of *Bread v. Cheese*, in which there were pounds at stake but no principle. Oh, with what zest they all went into it; being small men escaping from a great thing to a small one. Never hopped frogs into a ditch with more alacrity. Alfred left the court and hid himself, and the scalding tears forced their way down his cheeks at this heartless proceeding: to let all the witnesses come into court at a vast expense to the parties: and raise the cup of justice to the lips of the oppressed, and then

pretend he knew a trial would last more than two days, and so shirk it. "I'd have made that a reason for sitting till midnight," said poor Alfred, "not for prolonging a poor injured man's agony four mortal months." He then prayed God earnestly for this great postponer's death as the only event that could give him back an Englishman's right of being tried by his peers, and so went down to Oxford broken-hearted.

As for Sampson he was most indignant, and said a public man had no business with a private ear: and wanted to appeal to the press again: but the doughty doctor had a gentle but powerful ruler at home, as fiery horses are best ruled by a gentle hand. Mrs. Sampson requested him to write no more, but look round for an M.P. to draw these repeated defeats of justice to the notice of the House. Now there was a Mr. Bite, who had taken a prominent and honourable part in lunacy questions; headed committees and so on: this seemed the man. Dr. Sampson sent him a letter saying there was a flagrant case of a sane man falsely imprisoned, who had now been near a year applying for a jury, and juggled out of this constitutional right by arbitrary and unreasonable postponements: would Mr. Bite give him (Dr. Sampson) ten minutes and no more, when he would explain the case and leave documentary evidence behind him for Mr. Bite to test his statement. The philanthropical M.P. replied promptly in these exact words:

"Mr. Bite presents his compliments to Dr. Sampson to state that it is impossible for him to go into his case, nor to give him the time he requests to do so."

Sampson was a little indignant at the man's insolence; but far more at having been duped by his public assumption of philanthropy. "The little pragmatist impostor!" he roared. "With what a sense o' relief th' animal flings off the mask of humanity when there is no easy élat to be gained by putting 't on." He sent the philanthropical Bite's revelation of his private self to Alfred, who returned it with this single remark: "*Homunculi quanti sunt!*"

Dishonest suitors all try to postpone; but they do not gain unmixed good thereby. These delays give time for more evidence to come in; and this slow coming and chance evidence is singularly adverse to the unjust suitor. Of this came a notable example in October, and made Richard Hardie determine to precipitate the trial, and even regret he had not fought it out long ago.

He had just returned from consulting Messrs. Heathfield, and sat down to a nice little dinner in his apartments (Sackville-street), when a visitor was announced; and in came the slouching little figure of Mr. Barkington, alias Noah Skinner.

#### DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

Mr. Hardie suppressed a start, and said nothing. Skinner bowed low with a mixture of his old cringing way, and a certain sly triumphant leer, so that his body seemed to say one thing,

and his face the opposite. Mr. Hardie eyed him and saw that his coat was rusty, and his hat napless: then Mr. Hardie smelt a beggar, and prepared to parry all attempts upon his purse.

"I hope I see my old master well," said Skinner, coaxingly.

"Pretty well in body, Skinner; thank you."

"I had a deal of trouble to find you, sir. But I heard of the great lawsuit between Mr. Alfred and you, and I knew Mr. Heathfield was your solicitor. So I watched at his place day after day: and at last you came. Oh, I was so pleased when I saw your noble figure; but I wouldn't speak to you in the street, for fear of disgracing you; I'm such a poor little guy to be addressing a gentleman like you."

Now this sounded well on the surface, but below there was a subtle something Mr. Hardie did not like at all: but he took the cue, and said, "My poor Skinner, do you think I would turn up my nose at a faithful old servant like you? have a glass of wine with me, and tell me how you have been getting on." He went behind a screen and opened a door, and soon returned with a decanter, leaving the door open: now in the next room sat, unbeknown to Skinner, a young woman with white eyelashes, sewing buttons on Mr. Hardie's shirts. That astute gentleman gave her instructions, and important ones too, with a silent gesture; then reappeared and filled the bumper high to his faithful servant. They drank one another's healths with great cordiality, real or apparent. Mr. Hardie then asked Skinner carelessly if he could do anything for him. Skinner said, "Well, sir, I am very poor."

"So am I between you and me," said Mr. Hardie confidentially; "I don't mind telling you; those confounded Commissioners of Lunacy wrote to Alfred's trustees, and I have been forced to replace a loan of five thousand pounds. That Board always sides with the insane. That crippled me, and drove me to the Exchange: and now what I had left is all invested in time-bargains. A month settles my fate: a little fortune, or absolute beggary."

"You'll be lucky, sir, you'll be lucky," said Skinner cheerfully; "you have such a long head: not like poor little me. The Exchange soon burnt my earnings. Not a shilling left of the thousand pounds, sir, you were so good as to give me for my faithful services. But you will give me another chance, sir, I know; I'll take better care this time." Mr. Hardie shook his head sorrowfully, and said it was impossible. Skinner eyed him askant, and remarked quietly, and half aside, "Of course I *could* go to the other party: but I shouldn't like to do that. They would come down handsome."

"What other party?"

"La, sir, what other party? why Mrs. Dodd's, or Mr. Alfred's; here's the trial coming on, you know, and of course if they could get me to go on the box and tell all I know, or half what I know, why the judge and jury would say locking Mr. Alfred up for mad was a conspiracy."

Mr. Hardie quaked internally: but he hid it grandly, and once more was a Spartan gnawed beneath his robe by this little fox. "What," said he sternly, "after all I and mine have done for you and yours, would you be so base as to go and sell yourself to my enemies?"

"Never, sir," shouted Skinner zealously: then in a whisper, "not if you'll make a bid for me."

"How much do you demand?"

"Only another thousand, sir."

"A thousand pounds!"

"Why, what is that to you, sir: you are rich enough to buy the eighth commandment out of the tables of ten per cent: and then the lawsuit, Hardie versus Hardies!"

"You have spoken plainly at last," said Mr. Hardie grimly. "This is extorting money by threats. Do you know that nothing is more criminal, nor more easy to punish? I can take you before a magistrate, and imprison you on the instant for this attempt. I will, too."

"Try it," said Skinner coolly. "Where's your witness?"

"Behind that screen."

Peggy came forward directly, with a pen in her hand. Skinner was manifestly startled and disconcerted. "I have taken all your words down, Mr. Skinner," said Peggy softly: then to her master, "Shall I go for a policeman, sir?"

Mr. Hardie reflected. "Yes," said he sternly: "there's no other course with such a lump of treachery and ingratitude as this."

Peggy whipped on her bonnet.

"What a hurry you are in," whined Skinner; "a policeman ought to be the last argument for old friends to run to." Then, fawning spitefully, "Don't talk of indicting me, sir," said he; "it makes me shiver: why how will you look when I up and tell them all how Captain Dodd was took with apoplexy in our office, and how you nailed fourteen thousand pounds off his senseless body, and forgot to put them down in your balance-sheet, so they are not whitewashed off like the rest."

"Any witnesses to all this, Skinner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who?"

"Well; your own conscience *for one*," said Skinner.

"He is mad, Peggy," said Mr. Hardie, shrugging his shoulders. He then looked Skinner full in the face, and said, "Nobody was ever seized with apoplexy in my office. Nobody ever gave me 14,000*l*. And if this is the probable tale with which you come here to break the law and extort money, leave my house this instant: and if ever you dare to utter this absurd and malicious slander, you shall lie within four stone walls, and learn what it is for a shabby vagabond to come without a witness to his back, and libel a man of property and honour."

Skinner let him run on in this loud triumphant strain till he had quite done; then put out a brown skinny finger, and poked him lightly in

the ribs, and said quite quietly, and oh, so drily, with a knowing wink,  
 "I've got—THE RECEIPT."

### THE BENGAL POLICE.

THE Bengal police has been in existence for eighteen months; and, although its organisation is materially the same as the constabulary systems of Madras and the North-West Provinces—is in fact identical with that of Ireland—there are comparatively few in this country who are aware of the field it opens out for young men.

The foundation of police reform in Bengal is due to a minute by Sir J. P. Grant in November, 1854. He contended for the severance of the functions of criminal judge, from those of thief-catcher and public prosecutor, then combined in the office of magistrate; and he strongly argued that government should "work out this one sound improvement to the utmost" by subdividing the districts, and having in each subdivision an officer, whose sole duty should be "to control the police of the sub-division, but without any judicial power whatever."

Before the new force was established, there were two kinds of police in Bengal;—the military police, and the civil police. The former were nothing more nor less than native regiments, or, as they were designated, "battalions," were under the charge of commanders and adjutants, and were essentially military; the latter were under the control of the chief magistrate of the district, and in no way interfered with the duties of the battalions.

The military police had an enormous and very troublesome frontier to guard, Bengal being more exposed to the depredations of semi-savage tribes than any other government in India. In the Coles, the Santhals, the Assamee, the Kookies, and others, this presidency always had an element of danger within its own territory, while the frontier was exposed to the depredations of the misgoverned Bootanese, and innumerable uncivilised hill tribes. It was to obviate the necessity of keeping up the two distinct forces mentioned, that the present Bengal police was organised.

They are not soldiers, but constables. They have to undergo a certain amount of drill to secure discipline and proper spirit. All are taught the use of arms, which are a light carbine and sword, in the proportion of one fire-arm and sword to every two men. They never carry arms except when employed on treasure escort or jail duty, the bâton being the ordinary and sufficient instrument of defence. They are not required to observe the strict discipline essential in a military body. The details of police administration is in the hands of the officers of the force, and the magistracy can in no way interfere, although supposed to exercise a general control. This control, however, is confined to the chief magistrate of the district, and does not extend to sub-divisional authorities. Even his powers are of a most general descrip-

tion; the police being, in fact, a departmentally distinct body, subordinate to its own officers only.

The various grades of officers, with the salary attached to each, are as follows:

Grades.	Monthly Salary.	Yearly Income.
	Rupees.	£
Inspector-General ... ..	3000	3600
Deputy-Inspectors-General ... ..	1200	1440
Assistant Deputy-Inspectors-General ... ..	1000	1200
District Superintendents ... 1st Class	700	840
Ditto Ditto ... .. 2nd Class	600	720
Ditto Ditto ... .. 3rd Class	500	600
Assist. Dist. Superintendents 1st Class	400	480
Ditto Ditto ... .. 2nd Class	300	360
Ditto Ditto ... .. 3rd Class	250	300

Each district has its superintendent of either the first, second, or third grade, according to its position and importance. The head-quarters are at the principal station in that district, or wherever the chief civil authority resides; the assistant superintendents being in charge of smaller portions of the same district, and immediately responsible to the district superintendent, who again is under the authority of a deputy-inspector-general, or an assistant deputy-inspector-general. The lower grades are entirely composed of natives, and are filled by men enlisted in the locality. For instance, in the Assam circle, which includes Cachar, Sylhet, and the Kossiah and Jynteah Hills, we have Assamee, Cacharee, Kossiah, and Jynteah natives, who are thoroughly conversant with the country they serve in, and with the peculiar rascality for which each race is remarkable. A Kossiah policeman would be as useless in Assam, as a Chinese constable in the streets of London.

The deputy-inspectors-general are responsible for the efficiency of the whole police in their divisions, and are constantly moving about from one district to another, keeping a watchful eye on the general working of the police system. The district superintendents and assistants have by no means easy work, and if they conscientiously perform their duties, have little leisure time left them. Every offence, however small, has to be thoroughly investigated before it is sent up to the magistrate. If a murder be committed miles away from a station, the moment the news is brought in, an officer has to gallop off to the locality and hold a kind of coroner's inquest; and, when we consider that the scene of the murder may be thirty or forty miles distant, that turnpike roads are not so common in India as they are in England, and that travelling is by no means as pleasant, though possibly more exciting, it will be allowed that the service is no child's play or recreation, but downright hard work. Every morning the men off duty are paraded and drilled, then the daily reports from each quarter of the districts are brought in, the prisoners are examined, and the charges made out. During Cutcherry—that is, while the court is sitting—the officers of police are in attendance, unless employed on any other special duty. Disturbances are of the commonest description, whether it be amongst the indigo

ryots of Bengal, or the fanatics of Nowgory; and, if a police-officer did not speedily find his way to the spot supported by a sufficient force to uphold his authority, he would have to answer for it to his superior officers. The natives of India do not value life as dearly as we do, and a disturbance generally terminates fatally to one or two concerned in it. It may happen that a village objects to an income tax, or a new license tax, and, if it have the advantage of overwhelming numbers, the unfortunate collector fares ill. Hardly two years since, Lieutenant Singer, deputy commissioner of Nowgory, rode out a short distance from the station to make some inquiries into the disaffection manifested by the natives of a village regarding taxation, when he was met by a number of men with clubs, who at first threw down their weapons at his suggestion, but seized them again while he was endeavouring to collect them, attacked and killed him on the spot, and afterwards threw his body into a river. This was before the new police system was in existence, but affrays of the kind are very frequent even now, though generally unattended with loss of European lives.

The peace of a district depends greatly on the officers of the police. If they be vigilant and hard-working, and take care that their men do their duty, outbreaks are rare, and dissatisfaction is excited only by those who sooner or later find their proper level on the stone pavement of the district prison. Amongst other duties too numerous to give in detail, is the constant visiting of outposts by the officers to ascertain that the inspectors and overseers are discharging their duties faithfully. Bribery and corruption are notorious in all native officials however high their position may be, and, to prevent this, is in itself no light work.

The prospect of promotion in the Bengal police for officers is very good. A young fellow entering the service at eighteen or nineteen years of age, on two hundred-and-fifty rupees per month, or three hundred pounds a year, will—if he be steady, pass his examination, and thoroughly do his duty—probably by the time that he is five-and-twenty, find himself in the receipt of six hundred pounds per annum. There may be Dowds in the police of Bengal, as well as in every other service; but, as a rule, the promotion is very fair indeed, and is given to those who best deserve it.

All the appointments are in the sole gift of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to whose impartiality, firmness, and vigilance, the excellent working of the system is mainly due. When it first came into operation, the higher grades were filled almost entirely by officers of the army. Captains and subalterns of twelve and fifteen years' standing, and even field-officers, were only too glad to get into a service that was so well paid. It cannot long continue to be officered by military men however, for the simple reason that promotion must be given, when vacancies occur, according to

seniority and good service; and, as military men will not, as a rule, consent to enter as third class assistant superintendents, on two hundred and fifty rupees per annum, in time the force will be officered entirely by men whom it has brought up and trained.

According to the present rules, it is not necessary to pass any examination before appointment, eighteen months being allowed to all officers to acquire a knowledge of Hindustanee, Bengalee, law—as far as it relates to the police code—and a general knowledge of police duties; if, however, a candidate fail to pass his examination within the prescribed period, the appointment is forfeited.

Besides the monthly salaries attached to each office, there is a travelling allowance equal to one shilling per mile, whenever an officer is required to move about his district; and this, together with office allowances, adds sometimes considerably to his pay. The expenses on appointment are solely incurred for uniform, saddlery, and a couple of horses.

The Bengal police is a very healthy, pleasant, and exciting service, and affords appointments which we doubt not many young men in England will be glad to know of.

#### WATCHING AT THE GATE.

WHY was it that, on the twenty-fourth of July, 'sixty-two, a luxurious suite of rooms in the Hôtel des Ambassadeurs, at Toulon, seemed to me the most uncomfortable place on earth? the sofas too hard, the bed too soft, the carpets oppressively yielding, the windows, whether open or closed, equally wrong. Why could I neither work, nor read, nor write? Why did my piano produce frightful discords, my head ache, my heart throb?

For this reason. I had passed a long morning in the dockyards—sheltering myself from the fierce influence of that southern sun under whatever patches of shade I could find—and watching, from thence, strings of felon men, ironed, and at work. The sun's rays, reflected from every object—pavement, water, sand, iron—were almost insupportable.

"How fatiguing it is," observed one of our company, "to walk through a dockyard!"

"Try working in it," said another.

We formed a small party of fifty-two. By the courtesy of the authorities, all strangers, furnished with a proper pass—obtained at the Admiralty-office, close at hand—are admitted at a certain hour.

An intelligent official had the duty of attending us, and commenced with an earnest, almost solemn exhortation that we should "keep together." From beginning to end of our progress, this poor man was in a fever of anxiety lest we should separate and stray. If an unlucky sheep did for an instant quit the flock, our guide became almost wild with excitement and rage, rushing after the missing one, capturing him with little ceremony, and



urging him ignominiously back with none at all; yet managing, all the time, to keep an eye on the wavering fifty-one. Foaming at the mouth, he explained in a breathless manner that he was "responsible at the gate" for fifty-two bodies, no more, no less, whose entrance-orders and passports were in his pocket. Furthermore, he was responsible for the safety of all dockyard property. On this point it was vain to assure him that the abstraction of anchors, cables, bars, and beams, was the last object we had in view. It was clear that he never ceased to regard us with suspicion, and to watch every movement within his range of vision, as if he thought it boded an attempt to conceal marine stores in our hats and handkerchiefs.

Nothing could exceed the order and neatness of the whole department, the grand yet simple arrangement of its apparently inexhaustible resources of every kind; its pompous pyramids of iron hail; the trophy Napoleon, and the magnificent armoury, a work of absolute genius, with its interminable avenues of small-arms arranged in every conceivable form, with faultless accuracy, and bright as though dusted every hour. Among other quaint devices, there were orange-trees, in full bearing, whose leaves and branches were musket-locks, triggers, &c., and the fruit, nine-pound shot.

We had been handed over to a military escort through the armoury, and, on descending again to the court, rejoined our guide, when the chasings, captures, shouting, and remonstrance, recommenced with new vigour. Here, again, we encountered strings of sullen-browed convicts. Most of these wore the most horrible expression of hate and rancour; some few were rather cheerful than otherwise, and gazed at us with a sort of impudent curiosity. In general, however, they seemed to avoid looking at us at all, and when some of our party with an impulse of compassion touched their hats in passing, very few returned the salute. Their guard did not treat them harshly; but, as drove after drove passed by weary and lame from labour, allowed them to rest and drink at frequent intervals. It struck us as singular that so many were lame; but, when it is remembered that a convict who has escaped lameness, after but a year's imprisonment, may be recognised by the shuffling gait acquired by his shackled leg, it may easily be believed that a prolonged familiarity with the ring and chain may permanently affect the limb.

The faces of these miserable people were burned to a dark mahogany tint; most of them were condemned "for life," none for less than twenty years. Twenty years! Who can realise it? The heart of life cut hopelessly away—the time of hope, and joy, and profitable labour riven from the little span—and, in its stead, twenty long years of scorching sun, of biting wind, of work, and silence, and shame.

It must be owned that the *forçats* are commodiously lodged. The dormitories are large and high, and very airy. There is an inclined plane the whole length of the room, on which

the mat and rug are placed. At the foot, an immense iron bar passes round the apartment, to which the prisoner's foot is attached by a ring and chain.

From hence we went to the bazaar, where many little articles of really beautiful workmanship—carved wood and gourds, powder-horns, pouches, egg-cups, made by the convicts—were for sale, at prices ranging from two hundred francs to fifty cents. Some of the more important objects were exquisitely designed and wrought. The vendors were all convicts, and the secretary who receives the money and undertakes all the business arrangements, was himself a prisoner for life—for murder. An extraordinary thing about this man was the grim coxcombery of his dress. He was, of course, attired "en *forçat*," in red and yellow; but had somehow contrived to bring his unhappily-tinted garments within the rules of the prevailing fashions. His prison trousers were reduced in width one-half, and made to fit neatly round the calf and ankle, and the red blouse had been metamorphosed into a handsome scarlet swallow-tailed hunting-coat. The ring round his ankle was probably as bright as silver, but it was skilfully hidden. He bowed with much grace, and accompanied us politely to the door. Beyond it he dared not go. A ball from one of those good-natured-looking soldiers would speedily stop him if he did. He lifted his green cap—fatal badge of a life-captivity—and retired to his daily avocations.

We made many small purchases, the convict-mechanics showing unlimited confidence in our honesty and filling our hands with minute objects, many of which were of considerable value. One of the men showed me with his instruments the manner of carving cocoa-nut shells. While doing so, a tiny particle flew up into my eye, giving me for the moment intense pain. The poor man was overwhelmed with despair. His politeness—his pity—rose up in arms. Was madame much injured? Alas! she was enduring exquisite anguish—was it not truly insupportable? And all, unhappy one! by his mal-address! "Kind-hearted creature!" I might have thought. But my uninjured eye rested on the green cap—"Life"—"Murder."

After all, there were few of the fifty-two who did not leave that melancholy spot more sorrowful than they came.

Just as our cicerone was on the point of taking leave, he directed my attention to a little woman, quietly dressed, who was walking up and down on the pavement outside the gate. She looked nervously in at the open entrance, then, turning, walked hurriedly away. The glance, and the hurried turn, were repeated every time, and my friend of the dockyard told me that she had walked there, with few exceptions, *every day* for nine years. The guards at the gate know her as well as their own sentry-boxes, and some of them could note the gradual decay that had changed her from a bright young pretty-featured woman, to what she now appeared.

"She is so aged and altered," said the gardien,

"that if she is waiting for anybody *in there*, he will not recognise her when he comes out, for all her constancy. There are none *in* under twenty years, so eleven years more of this work will hardly add to her beauty!"

He said this with an awkward attempt to laugh; but there was an expression in his eye that showed me it was but an effort to conceal his sympathy, and he went on: "Any one who has observed her, as we have, can see that she is dying *now*. Yes, she is killing herself, for certain, about the one *in there*."

I was watching the poor little creature, when she came quickly towards us, gazed, in her nervous half-frightened manner, through the gate, then, with a hurried "Good morning" to my friend, walked hastily away, and disappeared. The good-natured fellow had lifted his cap, and returned her greeting; but looked half-ashamed of his politeness, and, in a semi-apologetic tone, began to explain to me that she always said *that* when her weary walk was over for the day, and added:

"She is so well known, that nobody thinks of stopping or questioning her, and this pavement is open to the public. There are only a few of us who can remember what a little beauty she was, nine years ago. She was always in tears, then, but now she only looks sad—as sad as ever. She had black hair then. Once, I asked her if I should try to get her an order to enter, and see any one *in there*. This so touched her, that she would have fallen, if I had not caught her. I shall never forget her face. She looked, somehow, frightened—I don't know what else to call it. She never answered me a word; but, as soon as she could stand, crept slowly away, steadying herself by the wall. She raised her hand, once, as if she was going to say something; but she did not speak, and went away, as I said, not coming back for several days. I began to feel sorry; thinking that, though I meant well, I might have scared the poor creature away; but, at last (on the fourth or fifth morning), there she was again, looking so changed and ill, that I only knew her by her ways. That day she said 'Good morning,' for the first time. It's more than eight years, now, and nobody has meddled with her since."

I asked him if it were possible to get news of a prisoner, through him.

He answered that the convicts leave all identity outside the walls. Within, they are nameless units, distinguished merely by a number. It is only the highest authorities who can identify or communicate individually with any convict.

As I left the gates, my thoughts returned from the pitiable watcher at the gate to the convicts within it. Could nothing be done to ameliorate the moral condition of the imprisoned outcasts? Did no man care for their souls? The enforced labour, the hard diet, the rigid disciplinary regulations, these, though painful, could be endured, and might each in the end bear wholesome fruit. It is a system that degrades the spirit, and extinguishes

those last glimmerings of self-respect which sometimes fight so hard for life; this it is which is most inimical to repentance, and wages insensate war against the very object it is the dearest aim of punishment to promote. The horrors of Norfolk Island were themselves the immediate sources of crimes too fearful to recall. Degrade a man into a beast, without stupifying his intellect to the beastly level, and wonder not that the maddened wretch—abandoned, as it seems, by God and man—yields up the relics of his judgment to the most ghastly conceptions of crime. Is not this playing into the hands of the tempter? True, we, in England, have been so eager to ameliorate this real "darkness within," as to be betrayed into an opposite danger; but even this, with its acknowledged inconveniences, was a noble error compared with that which, while confessing that a criminal is not deserving of death, eliminates him from the pale of humanity, extinguishes his individuality, and, teaching him neither penitence nor resignation, leaves him to weeping and gnashing of teeth, without one gleam of hope.

Now, I could understand why the poor little woman dared not relieve her heart-thirst by gazing on her fallen hero. The remembrance of him, even in his days of recklessness and crime, was more tolerable than the sight of his sullen apathy—the offspring of despair.

## THE SHOP-SIDE OF ART.

### I.

THE earth is full of couples who are made for each other; not only of couples whose destiny it is to love, but of those whose destiny it is to hate. For every spider there is created a fly; for every cat a mouse; for every bird a worm; for every "innocent" bill-holder a really innocent bill-acceptor, and for every picture-dealer a picture-buyer. It is doubtful if that favourite target of small divines—the world—could be kept revolving in mid-air without such a provision of nature, and, therefore, if we record the habits and manners of antagonistic races, let us do it with so little party-feeling, and so much philosophical calmness, that something like the truth may be arrived at.

### II.

Though Mr. Huggin was born some twenty years before Mr. Eizak Sleman, yet the latter gentleman was evidently destined to exert a peculiar influence over the former. The start that Mr. Huggin got in life over Mr. Sleman seemed only to have been used in preparing for that gentleman's appearance. If money was accumulated by Mr. Huggin—and it *was* accumulated—in a business so unpictorial as the tallow-trade, it was allowed to grow in all its rank luxuriance until Mr. Sleman presented himself to pluck it.

### III.

In tracing the rise and progress of Mr. Eizak Sleman, we are struck by the many changes

which a single name may undergo. The father of Mr. Sleman thought proper to sign himself Salamans, while another son gently changed his title to Slayman, a second to Sloman, and a third to Sleighman. The vowels are very accommodating. Another branch of the same family—an uncle of the subject of our sketch—went even further, and by adding “Van” to one end of his name, and the letter “n” to the other, he came out as Mr. Van Slemann. Without going into the question of how far individual taste may have had an influence in these changes, there is no doubt that they were found useful in all matters of business.

Young Eizak Sleman (or Solomons) was born in a mingled atmosphere of horses and art. If he had come into the world only ten years earlier, he might have found himself cradled in a low gaming-house, and ten years before that—about the time that Mr. Huggin was born—he might have wondered what took his father away for exactly seven years and a half—neither more nor less. As it was, however, he first saw the light in an obscure by-street, and in a low, brown shop, where betting-books had scarcely been driven out, and Holy Families (painted in oil) had hardly been gathered in. As he grew a little older, and able to use his eyes, he found that his father's permanent stock-in-trade was a large treacily portrait much cracked, of a woman in a ruff, a couple of bronze candlesticks, a few pieces of dusty old china, some empty picture-frames, and a parchment-coloured statuette of a figure that had no head, only half an arm, and one leg that wanted a foot. These things were always displayed in a coal-hole kind of gloom, and were never disturbed, either by buyer or seller.

As Eizak Sleman grew older still, and able to use his mind as well as his eyes, he was gradually taught some of the secrets of his father's business. He had the pleasure of seeing that business increase, and of learning the main principles upon which it was conducted. A thing of beauty is a joy for ever, was old Salamans's maxim; but only if you know how to deal with it.

The first step was to get the thing of beauty—the Holy Family, or the Head of the Madonna, as the case might be—and then to carefully prepare it as bait for the trap. This picture was never one of those manufactured masses of paint and varnish that are popularly supposed to be produced, in any quantity, in certain garrets, and to be baked and smoked in certain ovens and kitchen chimneys. The class of buyers that old Salamans angled for, were persons of some intelligence, some taste, much wealth, more vanity and cupidity, and a little judgment. These hucksters—for hucksters they were—could not be deceived by copies a week old, even if copyists of sufficient talent were to be drawn from more profitable work upon tenth-rate original pictures, or the reproduction of the modern masters. The common instinct of trade was against this form of fraud. If the well-known wormeaten wood,

or the peculiar canvas of the old masters, could be successfully imitated, what inducement would there be to exert this extra ingenuity, when a hundred safer and cheaper contemporary copies are to be found in the market?

The chief works, then, that Eizak Sleman's father was always endeavouring to secure, were pictures painted by those few earnest pupils who had sat at the living feet of the old masters. Sometimes the eyes of the masters had rested approvingly upon these works; sometimes their hands had kindly given them a touch of grace beyond the reach of the humble students' art. It may be, that amongst these nameless students, were many who strove hard to create something that the world should cherish, and who sank to rest with a faint hope that they had accomplished their task. They were spared the pain of seeing their images of beauty mellowed with age, enrusted with a thousand falsehoods, and patronised by greasy touters in low sale-rooms. If the bitter destiny of their lofty labour had been unfolded to them, they would surely have destroyed their handiwork, and the great Salamans family would have been fed only upon those coarse contemporary imitations that were openly painted and sold in the lifetime of the masters, by hucksters who knew no guile.

The elder Salamans, however, did not confine his dealings to the stray pictures of antiquity, but he became a patron of living art. He found out many British artists whose necessities were slightly in advance of their income, and, while he played the Samaritan, he made many presentable additions to his pictorial stock. With these productions, and the pupil pictures before described, a mass of framed and unframed rubbish was freshened up, and a catalogue prepared of a high class periodical sale. This sale was always largely supported by contributions from the great Salamans family; by pictures from “Slayman and Co.” (the eldest son) of Polyglot-square; by bronzes and articles of virtu from Humphrey “Sloman” (the second son) of Cameo-court, Oxford-street; and by more “charming” pictorial productions from “Sleightman and Sleightman” (the third son) of Sligo-buildings, City. The sale always took place at the auction-rooms of Mr. Van Slemann (the brother of the elder Salamans), which were situated in a prominent part of Mudgate-hill, the chief thoroughfare of London. These rooms were very gay and enticing in front, and very small and dark in the interior.

On the morning of the sale—or the attempted sale—about half an hour before the official arrival of the auctioneer—a little crowd was always collected on Mudgate-hill turning over the fluttering leaves of the catalogues that were nailed upon green-baize boards at the doorway, or looking at the great picture with which the trap was baited on that particular occasion, and which was displayed so as to catch the eye of passers-by at the single window in front. The greatest part of this crowd consisted of a number of middle-aged men, who were made up to play a part in such a manner, that they

ought not to have deceived a child. A ragged-edged yellow collar on a starch-caked yellow shirt, a high black stock worn threadbare at the sides, a well-brushed thin black dress coat, and rather shiny black trousers that would bear no violent exercise, a pair of mended Blucher boots, and a pair of ragged cotton gloves, is not the costume usually worn by wealthy collectors of art. Yet these were the highly polished men who were supposed to be regardless of money when a Rubens or a Corregio came in their way, and who, if not investing for themselves, were the confidential agents of Lord Mumblepeg, a devoted buyer of pictures, who was prevented by paralysis from attending personally at the sales. Poor wretches; they looked with their clean-shaven, melancholy faces, as if the slightest whispered invitation to a substantial dinner at a snug warm City tavern would have thrown them off their balance, and have caused them to fly, like a cloud of swallows, from the barren feast of paint.

Inside the auction-trap was a sprinkling of eager confederate dealers; the four or five porters, who were probably "junior partners," and who looked like prize-fighters; and the usual number of "picture agents." As soon as a promising stranger entered the room, it was the business of one of these latter men to fasten on him, and to explain the beauties and defects of the collection under sale. It must always be delightful to a man of refinement, to have such agreeable guides at his elbow, and to overlook their flavour of onions, tobacco, and stale-clothes, in admiration of their intense appreciation of art. There can, of course, be nothing to jar the most sensitive nerves in hearing a thick hoarse spunging-house voice enlarging upon the minute rendering of the crown of thorns, or in seeing a grimed knobby finger half hooped with brassy rings, employed in pointing out the hidden touches of the agony in the garden.

The sales at Mr. Van Slemann's were not entirely supported by family contributions, but were swollen by many "noble works" and "religious subjects" that were sent by other traders of a similar stamp. A fine of two shillings and sixpence upon every lot was found sufficient to cover the expenses upon these consignments, and pay the auctioneer a trifle for his trouble. When the sale of a high-priced picture to an ignorant but greedy purchaser did really occur—as it sometimes did—the transaction was saddled with, and able to bear, a commission of a very princely character. No man ever entered those rooms, or even peeped in at the window, who was not followed, and whose position in society was not thoroughly learnt, if he looked like, or promised to bud into a buyer. He may have been astonished to find that the pictorial treasures of his mansion were known to numbers of unsightly men, like sheriff's officers. He may have been astonished to find that after he had inquired about a landscape or a tavern scene at the shop of "Slayman and Co.," his hall table was loaded the next morning with Claudes and Tenierses,

from "Sleighman and Sleighman's," that had been left for his examination and approval by a strange man, a strange woman, or even a strange boy. He may have been astonished to find that his steps had been dogged from a print-shop; and that when he wanted a little advice about a picture to guide his not very reliable judgment, the owner of the property seemed to know where he had applied for that advice, if not the exact words of the advice that had been given. He would have been more astonished, if he had not "bled freely," to find himself the purchaser of a fine old crusted collection of Italian saints, and half a dozen sturdy witnesses springing out of the ground, who had each and all a distinct recollection that he had promised to pay two thousand guineas for them. If he gave any indications that, with proper care and management, he was likely to become that fallow-faced, wild-eyed spectre—the collector who would "bleed to death"—a net was woven round him, from which there was little chance of escape; he was fed with nothing but what was likely to encourage his one idea, and he was never deserted until he was reduced to madness, or to a mere fruitless husk.

This is the great victim that every art-huckster is always searching for, and who he knows is existing for him in some hidden corner of the world. His shops—his family organisation—his "knock-out" combinations—his delusive sales—are nothing but ingenious devices to employ his time, compared with the great mission of his life—the necessity for finding this victim in the crowd.

These were the experiences and teachings that were constantly before young Eizak Slemann as he grew to be a man; and when he attained that period of life, of course he became a picture-dealer.

#### IV.

And what had Mr. Huggin been doing for the last five-and-twenty years to prepare himself for the slaughter? Beyond the fact, already recorded, that he had made a good deal of money in the tallow-trade, he seemed to have reached the age of five-and-forty without being much the wiser for it.

His business was not sufficient to occupy his mind, and he wished to be known as something more than a successful merchant. Society did not fraternise with him. His dinners were eaten; but eaten with silent contempt; and it was while suffering under this galling treatment that, being unable to write a book or shake the senate, he formed the melancholy idea of setting up as a person of taste. He proceeded very gently—almost imperceptibly at first—as a man with his trading instincts and knowledge of the value of money would naturally do; but, by degrees, he gained courage, or found that timidity was worse than useless in the art-collecting world. He deserted his prints and etchings, his Antonios and Bolswerts, for paintings of various qualities and many schools. Living in a northern town, he employed in commissions a rude provincial practitioner, like a country barber, with no more



honesty than the great Salamans family, but with none of their keenness and experience. This man was so clumsy, and so greedy of present profit, that he would have nipped the most promising innocent purchaser in the bud. Before, however, he could succeed in disgusting the mind and opening the eyes of Mr. Huggin, that gentleman was carried out of his reach by important business in town.

## V.

It was at this period that the death of Sir Saffron Hill, the great collector and connoisseur, was announced. Sir Saffron Hill had excited the envy and admiration of his tribe for more than half a century. The envy was bestowed upon his collection, the admiration upon his judgment. He was supposed to possess everything that was unique and valuable; he was supposed to know the imposition from the genuine thing at a glance. If he declared a picture to be by the divine Raffaele, it was warranted: if he refused to say that a group of plump beauties was by Rubens, their reputation was hopelessly blasted. He had been heard to utter some contemptuous remarks about Guido, and Venuses fell, at once, to a discount in the market. His opinion was sought even beyond the realms of high art, and he was sometimes asked to place his hand on the brown back of a violin, and to tell its trembling owner if it was really a Straduarus.

Sir Saffron Hill lived a lonely life in one of the old squares, with nothing but his beloved collection and a few vulgar servants. He was very unwilling to show his collection, and was a miser, in every sense of the word, although it has been the fashion never to associate this character with anything but money. One evening, after dinner, Sir Saffron Hill was discovered dead in his easy-chair, with his latest purchase—a small piece of Talissy-ware—on the hearth-rug before him. There was abundance of dusky Utrecht velvet, tortoiseshell buhl, lapis lazuli, ebony, Sèvres porcelain, oil-colour gems, and water-colour jewels at his side and at his back, while a bust of one of the Cæsars, nearly over his head, seemed to be making faces at another Cæsar opposite, as if nothing had happened.

The death was rather welcomed by the art-world than otherwise, as it promised to disperse a very large and valuable collection. The late unrivalled connoisseur had died without a will, and the two discarded children—a boy and girl—who came forward to claim the property, were not disposed, either by education or circumstances, to retain it in its art form. A dozen hammers were trembling with eagerness, but the choice fell upon Messrs. Gowen and Gorne.

## VI.

For days you could hardly get near the celebrated auction rooms in Plush-street, St. Cræsus. The crowd was so great and so mixed, that many persons of authority said it was like going to court. The Countess of Dura was seen strug-

gling between Mr. Barrington from White-chapel (alias "Duffing Jemmy") and a leading member of the great Salamans family. The Duke of Majolica had his hat knocked over his eyes. The street was full of carriages, cabs, and go-carts; and the spotless auctioneers were accused of favouring certain visitors by letting them in through a skylight.

The second day's sale served to tone down this enthusiasm a little, and, on the third day, Mr. Huggin was passing by chance, and found his way into the centre of the auction-room.

"Lot ninety-five," continued the auctioneer, rapidly. "An interior—Van Pothaus—two figures at window—beautiful effect of pipe-light—credit alike to artist and collector—shall we say one hundred pounds?"

Two, three, five, ten hundred pounds were quickly offered from various parts of the crowd.

"Thousan' guinis," cried the eldest of the Salamans family. "Mr. Slayman and Co."

"One thousand and eighty pounds," exclaimed a feeble little gentleman in spectacles.

"One thousand and eighty pounds," repeated the auctioneer.

"Let Slayman 'av' it," shouted the venerable father of the Salamans family.

"Mr. Salamans," said the auctioneer, sternly, "I must beg that you will abstain from interrupting the sale."

The sale went on, and a tall, severe-looking, middle-aged gentleman, in a white necktie, secured the picture with a solemn inclination of his head, and a commanding wave of his hand, for fifteen hundred pounds.

"Lord Eiky Drummond, I think?" said the auctioneer's clerk, as he recorded the purchaser's name. The solemn inclination of the head was slowly repeated, and the Salamans family looked as if they had made the acquaintance of a new picture-buyer before unknown to them.

Mr. Huggin witnessed all this in silent amazement. He had read a few books that took the purple-bloom view of art, but not sufficient to turn his brain; and, at present, his chief touchstone of merit in a picture was the two-foot rule. The Van Pothaus he had just seen sold for such a considerable sum, was no larger than many works he had got at home, which he fully believed he had bought with the rarest taste and judgment. He saw more lots disposed of to buyers who took the well-advertised character of the late Sir Saffron Hill as a guarantee in every way sufficient for the value of the paintings. The Salamans family looked on, bought nothing, and gained some useful information about buyers. Mr. Huggin looked on and thought he saw his way, while gaining the reputation of a person of taste, to work a wonderful field for profitable investment. He bought a few more volumes upon the purple-bloom view of art, which he read, and mixed up with his shop view of the subject. When he had settled down, once more, in his northern city, he was in as fit a state as any collector could ever be, to be tapped by a judicious picture-dealer.

## VII.

The promising buyers who had turned up at the sale of the late Sir Saffron Hill's collection had been secured by Eizak Sleeman's brothers, and other labourers in the same vineyard. Lord Eiky Drummond had fallen to his father; and, though he felt that he could have made more of his lordship, the duty due from a son to a parent forbade him interfering in their transactions.

This position drove him, in some measure, into the country; and he tried a plan, well known in the trade, which had something of the prospecting rod about it. He endeavoured to draw out the local patrons of art by a travelling picture-sale. He sometimes said the sale was by order of the sheriff, which looked official. He sometimes gave out that the collection belonged to a gentleman in the neighbourhood, whose pecuniary difficulties had become too great to be borne. This stimulated curiosity, which brought an audience; and it was rare, indeed, if the auction passed off without something being sold at a handsome profit.

The enterprising picture-dealer pursued this plan for months—the summer months—without meeting with a promising victim. He had pushed himself, stage by stage, far into the land, and had just concluded an unsuccessful sale in a very dull but substantial northern town. He had retired, rather depressed, to his hotel, when he was told that a gentleman wished to see him. The proper couple had found each other, at last! The gentleman was Mr. Huggin.

## VIII.

Five years soon flew by after this interview at the hotel, and Mr. Huggin, to all appearance, had "bled" very freely. His walls were covered with "noble works," "delicious productions," "religious subjects," and warranted "masterpieces," from garret to cellar. Mrs. Huggin turned up her eyes when she looked at these treasures, shrugged her shoulders, and said nothing. Women are so odd. Mr. Huggin believed that the mantle of the late Sir Saffron Hill had descended upon his shoulders; and, as he had impressed his neighbours with the same belief, he was supremely happy.

Eizak Sleeman often made his appearance at Huggin Hall with a quantity of luggage. When he left, after staying a night, he had seldom anything more than a carpet-bag to take down to the station. Yet, although Mr. Eizak Sleeman's visits to Huggin Hall were always made to effect a sale, sometimes, as a matter of policy, he attempted to repurchase.

"You know Lord Eiky Drummond?" asked Mr. Sleeman.

"I've seen his lordship in public," answered Mr. Huggin.

"About that Teniers; he's mad a'ter it, an' don't mind three hundred pound."

"I'm sorry for his lordship."

"You on'y giv' me two for it, yer know."

"Mr. Sleeman," said Mr. Huggin, sternly, at this point, "I will not be talked to in this

manner. My principle is to buy pictures, not to job them."

## IX.

In spite of this stern rebuke, the purple-bloom view of art had never taken an undivided hold of Mr. Huggin, and had been shared with the lower feelings of the trade. When he began to grow tired of the barren reputation he had established as a person of taste, he prepared his gigantic collection for the market without the slightest misgiving. The impression made upon him at the sale of Sir Saffron Hill's treasures had never faded from his mind, and Messrs. Gowen and Gorne were, of course, the gentlemen who received his instructions. From this moment the hitherto constant Mr. Eizak Sleeman disappeared, and melted for ever, into the broad bosom of the Salamans family.

## X.

There was something wrong about the first day's sale. The attendance was numerous, and many pictures were sold, but the receipts were ridiculously small, considering the expectations of Mr. Huggin. Perhaps Mr. Huggin's reputation had not been so well advertised as the late Sir Saffron Hill's. Perhaps it would have been better if the collection had been sold as belonging to a mock baronet. The auctioneers were suspiciously, almost painfully silent. Mr. Huggin glided busily about the room, and was much hurt to find that those who appeared to be professional picture-dealers abstained from rising beyond a very low bidding. Mr. Huggin prided himself upon being a shrewd, experienced man of business, and he thought he knew exactly what to do under the circumstances. He privately retained several sham buyers for the second day's sale in order to support the market.

The first lot that was brought forward was an enormous piece of Chinese-looking art, that was said to be the masterpiece of the divine Bellini.

"Ten pounds?" began the auctioneer.

"Thirty, forty, ninety, two hund'ed, seven hund'ed," shouted half a dozen shabby men, who leaped up, one after the other, like so many Jacks-in-boxes.

"Ten pounds, I say," repeated the auctioneer, looking sternly at the sham bidders, and going back to his starting-point.

"Ninety, two hund'ed, six hund'ed, thousand," exclaimed the same shabby men, leaping again.

"Gentlemen," said the auctioneer, with dignity, "it is evident what this means. I think we'd better close the sale."

There was much confusion after this, but no serious opposition to the proposal; and, in half an hour, the public had all left the place.

"Mr. Gowen—Mr. Gorne—Sir—gentlemen," said Mr. Huggin, excited and humbled, in the auctioneer's private counting-house, "there's some mistake about these pictures—there is, indeed!"

"Mr. Huggin," replied Mr. Gowen, in a tone of pity, "the mistake is entirely on your side.

You have been grossly imposed upon in a way we can understand. Many hundreds of gentlemen have been so deceived before, and many hundreds will doubtless be so deceived again. Good morning."

#### FOR LABRADOR, SIR?

A CANADIAN professor wishes to know when we mean to establish settlements in Labrador? In this winter weather the round Briton who likes to nurse the fire, and go to sleep after his dinner within easy reach of the coal-scuttle, is to be tempted only by some great attraction far away from the settlement of his choice, in an arm-chair. He will not trouble himself to open his eyes when he is told that the fisheries on the Atlantic coast of Labrador are worth a million sterling, yet that, since the destruction of the town of Brest at the gulf entrance of the Straits of Belleisle which separate the south of Labrador from the north of Newfoundland, there has been no settlement of consequence. Yet a quarter of a million would at once be saved if there were curing establishments upon the coast. He wants no more fish. He has dined. What is it to him that there is ground waiting for civilised man in the great valleys of the interior, with fuel and building timber in abundance, and a soil and climate capable of yielding green peas and potatoes? He only knows that it is pleasant, while he roasts his slippers, to think of that great north-easter-land upon the boundary of Canada, chill Labrador in the far north, with its coast facing the Greenland sea, as a place to which it is heroic in the Moravian missionaries to go forth and settle, with their usual preference for "Greenland's icy mountains" over "India's coral strand." Every man to his taste, and he can understand that sort of taste a little; for he himself can't dine without ice, and has a weakness for ice-pudding.

While the British fire-worshipper snores in his easy-chair, we will accept the invitation of our friend MR. HENRY YOULE HIND, Professor of Chemistry and Geology in the University of Toronto, to run over and look at the interior of the Labrador peninsula. Any fire-worshipper may do the same, by help of Mr. Hind's couple of volumes.

We may go, if we will, by the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada, destined hereafter to carry fish of the Labrador coast into the great cities of the west (when North and South have come to the end of their fighting wind), and the present terminus of the Grand Trunk at Rivière de Loup has been connected with the Bay of Chaleurs. Wishing all future success to the Grand Trunk, which is not a money-chest at present—as some people know—with a hop and a skip, we are in Labrador, together with our canoes, portable tents, flannel-shirts, guides, smoked bacon, biscuit, and all other necessities for the exploration we intend to make.

Each canoe is no bigger than one man can

carry. It will carry in its turn three men, and five hundred-weight of provisions. In Labrador, sometimes the boats carry the men; at other times, down the hills by the side of the worst rapids, the men carry the boats. The native Indians are the Montagnais and the Nasquapees (upright-standers); hardy fellows in the interior, who, when they get down to the coast and stop there a few months, eating seals and fish, become rheumatic, consumptive, and by physical weakness indolent. Up stream, paddle Professor Hind; and Mr. William Hind his brother, who carries the portfolio, pencil, and paint-box; and Messrs. J. F. Gaudet, and Edward Caley, Government Surveyors.

Except a few settlements on the St. Lawrence and North Atlantic coasts, and some widely separated ports of the Hudson's Bay Company, all Labrador—a region as large as France will be, when she has annexed not only Prussia but the British Islands too—is peopled only by a few wandering bands of Montagnais and Nasquapee, Mistassini and Swampy Creek Indians, and by wandering Esquimaux upon the northern coasts. The part of this great region drained by the St. Lawrence, is said to belong to Canada. The middle part, supposed to be drained by rivers flowing into the Atlantic, where it is called the Greenland Sea, is said to be under the jurisdiction of Newfoundland. And the part of which the rivers flow to Hudson's Bay, is called the East Main. But these regions have undefined boundaries, for when Professor Hind set out upon his exploration there was no true knowledge of the interior.

The river Moesie or Mis-te-shipu (the same as Mississippi, or Great River) flows into the Gulf of St. Lawrence about eighteen miles east of the Bay of Seven Islands. It is the great river of the Montagnais Indians, and seven of them having made a clever chart of its course, the first work of exploration was to test the value of this. Good-tempered Louis—a Montagnais Indian, who is a bad shot, but understands a canoe—is chief steersman; and his wife, a very handsome squaw, stands by at his departure, though she will have nothing to do with him, will not look at him, and is ashamed of him, because he cannot hunt. The priest comes only for a few days once a year, and when he last came she agreed in a hurry to be married to him. Two days after the wedding, they went out, Indian fashion, to hunt seals together; the wife steering, the husband ready with his gun, as usual. His first shot was a very bad one; and without a word she paddled to shore, jumped out, and ran back to her father's lodge. He begged for another chance, and she went out with him another day. He missed the first seal. She paddled him to a second; he missed that. Then she looked at him in a way that made him very nervous, said nothing, and paddled him close up to a third. He was flurried, and missed again. Whereupon she again paddled ashore, left him, and has given him the "cut direct" ever since. Nevertheless, Louis, with a lucrative job in prospect, asks for fifteen dollars

in advance, and these he sends to the disdainful lady as a peace-offering. She takes the money, but vouchsafes no word of thanks for it.

The waters are high. We must land before reaching the foot of the rapids, and cut a way for ourselves, and our packs and canoes, through a mile of close wood, before reaching the usual landing-place for portage by the banks of the strong torrent. This is the Grand Portage, with undescribed country beyond it. Summer rain turns suddenly, with a wind from the north, to frost. It is wonderful to think what a refrigerator the north wind can be, when one is near the Polar laboratory of cold weather. Mr. Gaudet, the surveyor, remembers sleeping in an open tent near the dividing ridge between Lakes Superior and Winnipeg, in the winter of 1858-9, going to bed rolled in four stout blankets, with the cold a few degrees below zero. In the night he and his whole company awoke in the same minute with the touch of an icy north wind, under which the tested and accurate spirit thermometer from the observatory of Toronto showed a sudden drop of temperature to forty-six below zero.

All along this portage, at distances of from a hundred to three hundred yards apart, are marten traps. The line of marten traps, or marten road, extends for thirty miles, and was the work last winter of an Abenakis Indian, who built his lodge midway, and made it a week's round to visit them. He began late, and his winter's labour produced him only twenty-two martens. Had he begun early, and been fortunate, he might have had fifty or sixty. For each marten's skin he would get five dollars. He was plagued, too, with a carcajou or wolverine that once followed him unobserved along the whole fifteen miles on one side of his lodge when he baited the traps, and ate up the bait after him. On his way back, he found every trap empty. Such a beast puts in his paw and pulls out his plum without at all minding the rap on the knuckles caused by the fall of the trap while he is thieving. The carcajou is clever, too, at finding and opening a cache, or getting at the pack of the poor Indian hunter's food or store of furs. It is not enough to hang the pack to a tree-branch. The wolverine will climb and spring down on it; but if a couple of the dog-sleigh bells be hung lightly to the bundle, at the alarm of their tinkling off he scuds. The carcajou thief is a four-legged magpie, who steals for the sake of stealing. A hunter and his family once went from home, leaving their lodge unguarded. When they came back, it was robbed to the bare walls; blankets, guns, kettles, axes, cans, knives, all were gone, and the tracks showed who had been the robber. The family went on the traces of the carcajou, and got nearly everything back.

Besides the martens, there are lynxes (known as cats), bears, musk-rats, otters, and foxes, but the marten's skin is worth them all. A man had his comrade and cousin killed, when after a lynx. The two men were both on its track, and, when they were separated, one, coming upon the beast,

shot and wounded it; but at the same time he himself slipped into a narrow cleft of rock under the snow, breaking one of his legs. The lynx fastened upon him, and tore off part of his scalp. He killed the wild beast with his knife, but because of the broken leg he could not get out of the cleft, neither could he reach the gun that had fallen away from him when he stumbled in; so he lay there all night in the frost, unable to signal his companion. In the morning, when he was found, he was on the point of death. His brother hunter added his dead body to the load on the dog-sledge, and dragged it home for burial. A woman of these tribes finding her son shot dead by the accidental discharge of his gun as she leaped out of his canoe, carried the body in her arms a three weeks' winter journey over rock and mountain, that she might lay him in the grave of his dead father.

These ways are difficult even when down hill to the sea: so it is certainly no easy work to carry at the portages the baggage and canoes up the steep hills and rocks of this rough country, besides having one's road to cut through a dense forest now and then. The river flows often between high hills and precipices over which hang sometimes, stupendous sheets of ice. It is a native highway, and the animals on it are scarce. Once, the interior was more populous than it is now. The Indians found it not too easy to kill or take the reindeer. They could kill, and they cared to kill, only what was sufficient for their food. But trappers gave them guns, and taught them to kill deer for their skins. That tended to some such famine as they felt about 1790, in what is now one of the oldest and best settled parts of Canada, because in two consecutive hard winters the reindeer had fallen a prey to the wolves. Again, the wasting of large tracts of country by fires spreading in the dry moss that fasten also on the woods, destroys the food of the reindeer; and these fires have become far more common than they were, when there were no lucifer matches or other substitutes for the old method of rubbing pieces of wood together.

In Labrador, on a hot day, the traveller who believes himself most careful, lights a cooking fire on the portage; it may spread into the dry reindeer or caribou moss, and then uprises the flame and runs before the wind that increases as the fire spreads. Out of the blinding smoke the traveller and all his party must then rush, hastily snatching up packs and canoes, and without stopping to shift the burden on an aching shoulder—without staying a moment to fetch breath—may have to run with the fire at their heels, spreading over the light moss at a pace as quick as theirs, until they get to the end of the portage and can dash their canoes into the water, or take refuge on a sandbank at the river's edge. Then they may crouch to let the hot smoke and ashes pass over, and may rise ten minutes afterwards to see clear air above, and the fire roaring and hissing on before them to spread on and around till it is stopped by rain, by lakes, by river-courses, or by the wet moss of



a damp forest. Dry forests are eaten up by these wide-spreading fires, which have already turned immense tracts of the Labrador peninsula into an uninhabitable wilderness.

When Mr. Davies, in 1840, was exploring a river by Esquimaux Bay, and had been out ten days without meeting Indians, he ordered the usual smoke signal of the country to be made on a neighbouring hill, that any Indians who were near might see it and come to him. He encamped, and was sitting at his tent door, enjoying a cool breeze which had just sprung up, when he was startled by a noise like thunder, and the frantic shouts of his men. The fire was upon them. If their camp had not been on a spot of green wood they would not have had even the few minutes that barely sufficed for escape at the top of their speed. Before they were half across the river, the whole mountain was a mountain of fire, and that fire, spreading for weeks, laid waste hundreds of square miles of land.

The burning of a spruce birch forest at night is like a gigantic display of fireworks. A spruce-tree flashes at once into flame from top to bottom with a crackling hissing roar, with quick loud snaps and a splendid red light. The birch-trees burn with steady flame, pouring up into the sky huge clouds of smoke that cover the flaming forest, and reflect from it a lurid light, into which every sharp gust of wind sends up a great column of sparks in spiral eddies. Ten, twenty, fifty, trees at a time shoot up their twisting flame. The fire subsides. And then from other trees, another outburst makes the rocks and mountains glow: while the disturbed wild-fowl fly in wide circles overhead, and fly down like moths into the flame, or, when suffocated, drop straight into it, like stones.

These are not lively considerations for the settler, who will have to change all this; and it must grieve the heart of a microscopist to hear of this great waste of Canada balsam. Canada balsam's virtues are familiar to the Indian. Does a man, when woodcutting, chop into his foot with an axe; his surgeon is the nearest balsam spruce. He holds the lips of the wound firmly together, the sticky balsam is fetched and spread over the cut as glue, bleeding is stopped at once, and in three days the cut is well. These Indians also doctor themselves with vapour-baths, and use the root of the blue iris, or a decoction of the red willow, as a purgative. Other medicines are the roots of rushes or of the white water-lily, and when these fail, resort is always to be had to charms. His implicit faith in dreams leads the poor Indian of the Labrador peninsula to the commission sometimes of great crimes, in the religious effort to do what he dreamed he did. But happily the missionaries have corrected much of this old superstition. Conceive the state of any populous country in which it should be every man's care to act out his dreams, and realise by day the senseless visions of the night. What a terror to society would the man addicted much to nightmare, be!

A remarkable feature in Labrador, is the

immense development of lichens on the rocky soil. Instead of the thin "time stain" on stone or wood, familiar to us in England, there is the caribou or reindeer moss: a lichen, covering large tracts of ground with a growth two feet thick, on which the reindeer feed. Elastic in moist weather; in dry weather, as the fires testify, grown tindery; it breaks under the tread, and shows every footprint in the track of man or deer. Next in importance to this lichen is the "tripe de roche," another lichen growing throughout all the cold parts of North America on trunks of trees and gneiss rocks. This was the sole food of some of our great Arctic heroes, in their days of deadly peril. But, steeped in a weak solution of carbonate of soda (which they had not), washed and boiled, yields a jelly which becomes very palatable, when it can be flavoured with wine or lemon. Recent development of lichen dyes may make, hereafter, even the lichens of Labrador a source of wealth.

But the chief source of wealth is, at present, the cod-fishery, which is most active in June, July, and August. All the cod taken before September is salted and dried for exportation. What is taken from September to the close of the fishing season, is only salted and packed in barrels for the markets of Quebec and Montreal.

Our old gentleman by the fire has pricked up his ears at the name of codfish. But he has done with codfish for to-day, and goes to sleep again. What little he may have heard of Labrador will not induce *him* to go out. Nor is it likely that many of the race of active men will care to go so far north, although the ground is really almost unoccupied.

### TOO HARD UPON MY AUNT.

At five o'clock on the evening of the 31st of December, 1849, Mr. Twinch, of Grosvenor-street, rushed into his dining-room with a packet in his hand, sat down at a little Davenport writing-table in the window, and scribbled off the following letter:

"My dear Madam,—I am delighted to say that I have been able to keep my word, and herewith send you what you require. With best compliments, I am,

"Faithfully yours,

"PAYNHAM TWINCII."

This note he folded round the packet, placed both in a stout envelope, which he addressed "Miss L. Pemberton, The Grove, Heavitree, near Exeter;" carried the packet to a neighbouring receiving-office, caused it to be duly registered, and with the receipt in his pocket returned home.

Miss Letitia Pemberton was my father's youngest sister, a maiden lady of middle-age, kind, amiable, and accomplished, whom everybody liked for her good temper, and whom many of us younger ones regarded with deep interest on account of what we were pleased to term "her romance." For when Aunt Letitia was a girl she was very pretty, and was a county

beauty, and a reigning toast for miles round: she had scores of admirers, but behaved very scornfully to all of them, and she had acquired a reputation of being thoroughly heartless, when she chose to tumble head over ears in love with a Mr. Butterworth, a fair-haired, mild, spooney young man, who had come up from Oxford to read with my father during the long vacation. Of course Mr. Butterworth responded, and the affair was progressing to the great satisfaction of the lovers, and the intense delight of my father, who thereby was relieved from much of Mr. Butterworth's society, and all his tuition. But when my grandfather, who was what is called "one of the old school," a remarkably peppery veteran, discovered what was going on, he showed Mr. Butterworth the door, and was with great difficulty restrained from kicking him through it. Aunt Letitia wept and sulked by turns, but it was of no use, and soon afterwards my father heard that Butterworth had left Oxford, and gone out as private secretary and companion to an old gentleman who held some high official appointment in South America. Miss Letitia redoubled her lamentations, but that was the last that was heard of Mr. Butterworth.

Until years after, when my grandfather had been long since dead, my father long since married, myself and my sister long since born, and my Aunt Letitia long since resident with us at The Grove, my father, in London on some business, accidentally ran against a portly gentleman in the Strand, who, turning round with hurt dignity, revealed the features of the mild Mr. Butterworth of bygone years. He told my father that his patron had died, leaving him his fortune; that he had married in South America, but that his wife had died within a twelvemonth of their union, and that he had come home to settle in England. He asked my father for all his news, and wound up by saying, "And—Miss Letitia—is—she—still—?" And my father said she was—still—but that Butterworth had better see for himself. This proposition seemed to suit Mr. Butterworth entirely. He should be in Devonshire about the end of the year; he had business at Exeter. Finally, it was decided that he should dine on New Year's-day at The Grove, and pass the night there.

When my father came home with the news, my Aunt Letitia was tremendously affected. We noticed next morning that a kind of dust-trap of black lace, skewered on to a comb which she was in the habit of wearing at the back of her head, had been got rid of, and that she had a mass of plaits in its place; we noticed that the usual night-shirt hemming for the charity children had been put aside, and that a large portion of her day was spent in devouring the poetical works of the late Lord Byron, in a Galignani Edition brought from Paris by my father many years before. We noticed—we could not help noticing—how pretty she looked with her bright complexion, her white teeth, her neat little figure, and as the days passed by she seemed to grow

more and more animated. One day, however—I remember it perfectly, it was the 16th of December, and we had boiled beef for dinner—my aunt was taken dreadfully ill; it was at the dinner-table, when, without the slightest warning, she suddenly gave a sharp scream, placed her handkerchief to her mouth, and rushed from the room. My mother followed, and so did my sister, but the latter had my aunt's bedroom door slammed in her face. When my mother rejoined us, she had a little private conversation with my father, and we were then told that Aunt Letitia was very ill, and would probably have to keep her room for many days. All sorts of invalid's delicacies, broth, soups, calf's-foot jelly, and sago puddings, were sent up to her, but she did not reappear amongst us, and it seemed very doubtful whether she would be able to do so by the time of Mr. Butterworth's visit.

I must now change the venue, as the lawyers call it, of my story. At midnight, on the night when Mr. Twinch posted his letter, the down night-mail running between Paddington and Plymouth was within ten miles of the station at Exeter. In the travelling post-office two clerks, with their warm caps drawn far down over their ears, were sorting letters for dear life, one or other of them turning round now and then and oburgating old Barnett, the mail guard, who occasionally opened the window and pushed his head out to inform himself of the train's whereabouts, bringing it back always with a puff, and a snort, and an exclamation that the frost was a "reg'lar black 'un to-night, and no mistake." Close upon Exeter now, all old Barnett's sacks for delivery are ready on the floor close by the door, handy for the porters to seize, old Barnett himself sitting on the pile, clapping his hands, stamping his feet, and whistling to himself softly the while. With a protracted grind, a bump, and a shriek, the train ran alongside the Exeter platform, and old Barnett pushed back the sliding door of the travelling-office and handed the sacks to the expectant porter. But ere the man touched them, he said, while his face was ghastly white and his voice trembled, "Lord Mr. Barnett! such a smash to-night!" "Smash!" said old Barnett; "what, an accident?"

"Pooh!" said the porter, "not that, that would be nothing—no—they've robbed the up-mail!"

"Robbed the up-mail!"

"Ah, tender broke open, bags all cut and hacked, and letters all strewn about the floor. You never see such like!"

"The deuce they have!" said Barnett, after a moment's pause; "well, Simon, my boy, I'll take devilish good care they don't rob my mail. Here, clear these bags out, and let's pass." He jumped down on to the platform, ran to the next carriage, which was the "post-office tender," a second-class carriage fitted up for the reception of mail-bags, unlocked the door with a key, saw all secure, relocked the door, and returned to the

travelling post-office just as the train began to move.

Old Tom Barnett had been in the Post-office service in one capacity or other for nearly forty years, during the whole of which time no word of complaint had ever been uttered against him, and, a strict disciplinarian himself, he naturally felt that there must have been some dereliction of duty on the part of his brother-guard of the up-mail, of which the robbers had taken advantage. Consequently, as the train flew through the black darkness at forty-mile-an-hour speed, Barnett, at five-minute intervals, lowered the window of the travelling-office and peered out in the direction of his "tender." He could not distinguish much; all he could make out (and this principally from the shadows thrown on the embankments) was that the train was, as usual, a short one: that immediately after the engine came two second-class carriages, then the travelling-office in which he was, then his tender, then a first-class carriage, and then finally a luggage-van. Nothing particular was to be seen, nothing at all (save the invariable rumping, roaring, and rattle) was to be heard; on they sped through the darkness, and never stopped until they came to Bridgewater, where old Barnett descended, took his key from his pocket, unlocked the tender, and—fell back, calling, at the top of his voice, "Help!—thieves!—damme, they've done me!" At his cry, two of the train-guards came running up, and turned their bull's-eye lanterns on to the tender, into which Barnett at once climbed. The mail-bags, ordinarily so neatly arranged, lay scattered in pell-mell disorder on the floor, the Plymouth bag had been shifted from the hook on which it had been hung, and, on examining it, Barnett found it had been opened, and re-tied but not re-sealed; short bits of string, splashes of sealing-wax, and drifting pieces of tindered paper covered the floor of the tender, and the window on the further side—which had been carefully closed when they left Bristol—was open. "They've done me!" roared old Barnett again; "but they shan't escape! they're somewhere in this train, and I'll have them out!"

At this juncture two gentlemen, one of whom was recognised as Mr. Marlow, one of the directors of the company, the other as Mr. Joyce, the great contractor, to whom the safe keeping of a great portion of the permanent way was confided, came up and inquired what was the matter. On the affair being explained to them, they agreed with Barnett as to the necessity for closely searching the train, and all proceeded at once to the first-class carriage which was immediately next to the post-office tender. This, as is usual, was divided into three double compartments. The first was that from which Messrs. Marlow and Joyce had just emerged, and was, of course, empty; so was the second; in the nearest division of the third compartment was an old gentleman named Parker, well known on the line as a solicitor of Modbury, whose business fre-

quently took him to London. The door between the divisions in this carriage was closed and the blind drawn down. On being recognised, Mr. Parker at once answered to his name, and stated that the further division was occupied by two men who had entered the carriage at Bristol, and had at once closed the door and drawn down the blind. Had he noticed anything further about them? No, he had not. Yes! as they got in he noticed something dragging after them; unperceived by them, he put down his hand and found it to be a piece of string. He cut off what remained on his side when they shut the door, and here it was. Barnett looked at it, and exclaimed, "Bag string, official bag string without a doubt!" One of the railway guards then opened the door and looked into the other division. In it were two men; one of them with a Jim Crow hat pulled over his eyes, and enveloped in a large thick cloak, was lying with his legs upon the opposite seat, and was apparently suffering from the toothache, as he held his pocket-handkerchief up to his face; the other a tall man in a dark Chesterfield great-coat, was screwed into his corner of the carriage, and was apparently asleep. "Tickets, please!" called out old Barnett, and as the reclining man raised himself to get at his ticket the handkerchief fell from his face, and the railway guard, recognising him at once, called out, "Hallo, Pond! is that you? What are you doing down the line?" Instead of answering this question, Pond told the guard to go to the devil; but Mr. Marlow had heard the exclamation, and asked the guard whether the man in the carriage was Pond, formerly a guard in their service, who had been dismissed some six months before on suspicion of robbery. The guard replying in the affirmative, old Barnett's previous suspicions were fully confirmed, and he insisted on having both the men (who, of course, declared they were strangers to each other) thoroughly searched. Nothing at all extraordinary was found on either of them, but from the pocket of the carriage in which they had been travelling were taken a crape mask, a pair of false moustachios, a bit of wax-candle, and some sealing-waxed string. As the time for the starting of the train had now arrived, old Barnett and Mr. Parker travelled in one compartment with Pond, while the two railway guards took charge of his anonymous friend, and thus they journeyed to Plymouth, where, on their arrival at the station, the prisoners were at once taken into one of the waiting-rooms under Barnett's custody, while the others proceeded to search the carriages for further traces of the robbery. That was an anxious time for old Tom Barnett; he felt convinced that these were the culprits, but if they had made away with their spoil, if something were not found the identification of which could be ratified beyond doubt, he knew that the prosecution would fail. At last the men entered bearing a bundle. "Here it is, all right!" said one of them.

"What is it?" asked Barnett.

"A lot o' registered letters, most of 'em broke open, tied up in pocket-'ankerchief and shoved under the seat where Pond was sittin'."

"Brayvo!" cried old Barnett, "brayvo! But have you got anything that can be identified—anything that can be swore to?"

"Well, I don't know!" said the guard, grinning. "I don't think there'll be much difficulty in the owner's swearin' to *this*!" and he held up the torn cover of the packet which Mr. Twinch had posted. Old Barnett glanced at its contents, then clapped his hands and burst into a roar of laughter.

The fact that the postman who called at The Grove as usual on the 1st of January, brought no letter for my Aunt Letitia, created immense consternation in our family circle. My mother seemed much vexed, and even my father, usually a taciturn man, allowed that it was "confoundedly unfortunate." As for my aunt, we never heard what happened, but it was generally understood that she had a relapse. The day passed on, and Mr. Butterworth arrived; he manifested great concern at hearing of my aunt's illness, and plainly showed that he had missed the real object of his visit. He was dull and silent, and when my mother left the gentlemen sitting over their wine, scarcely a word was exchanged between them, and my father was just nodding off to sleep when he was aroused by a loud ring at the gate, followed by the entrance of the servant, who stated that a rough-looking man wanted to speak to Miss Letitia, and would take no denial. My father immediately went out into the hall, closely followed by Mr. Butterworth, and there they found a tall fellow, who introduced himself as a member of the county constabulary, and who reiterated his wish to speak with (apparently reading from something in his hand) "Miss L. Pemberton."

"You can't see her," said my father: "she's ill, and in her room. I'm her brother; what do you want?"

"Well, sir," said the man, ponderously, "there have bin a robbery, and we want the lady to swear to some of the swag."

"Some of the swag?" said Mr. Butterworth. "Some of the swag!" repeated my father. "What does the man mean?"

"Why the man means just this," said the constable; "the mail's been robbed, and 'mongst the things broke open was this addressed to Miss L. Pemberton. There won't be no difficulty about her recognisin' it, I fancy." And as the wretch spoke he drew from a packet a top row of dazzling false teeth!

Yes, that was the secret of Aunt Letitia's illness. A year or two before, when nature failed her, she called in the assistance of art, and availed herself of the services of Mr. Twinch, but an accident occurring on the fatal boiled-beef day, the teeth were sent back to their creator, who had the strictest injunctions to return them, renovated, by the first of January. Mr. Twinch obeyed these orders implicitly; and, had not Mr. Pond and his friend selected that very night for the robbery of the mail, all would have been well. As it was, the teeth were detained by the lawyers for the prosecution until after the trial, at which they were produced, and at which my aunt also was compelled to appear; though strongly against her will. But, when once on her mettle, she behaved with great spirit, and gave her evidence with such clearness (albeit with a pretty lisp), that she was complimented by the judge, and was the main cause of Mr. Pond and his friend being found guilty, and sentenced to fifteen years' transportation.

It has never been known to this day whether Mr. Butterworth was in court. At all events, three days after he called at The Grove, and then found that he had business which would oblige him to take lodgings in the neighbourhood for a month. At the end of that time I was measured for a new suit of clothes, and wore them one morning when they seemed to have dinner—champagne, cold fowls and things—at twelve o'clock; and when Mr. Butterworth had on a blue coat, and when Aunt Letitia laughed a good deal, and cried all over my new jacket, as she bade us good-by, and told us she was then Mrs. Butterworth.

Now ready, Stitched in a Cover, price Fourpence,

## MRS. LIRRIPER'S LODGINGS,

FORMING THE

### EXTRA DOUBLE NUMBER FOR CHRISTMAS.

#### CONTENTS:

How Mrs. Lirriper carried on the Business.  
How the First Floor went to Crowley Castle.  
How the Side-Room was attended by a Doctor.  
How the Second Floor kept a Dog.

How the Third Floor knew the Potteries.  
How the Best Attic was under a Cloud.  
How the Parlours added a Few Words.

On the 4th of January, 1864, will be commenced, to be completed in Six Numbers of ALL THE YEAR ROUND, a New Story, called A WHITE HAND AND A BLACK THUMB.  
Volume XI. will begin on the 15th of February, 1864, with a New Serial Story, entitled QUITE ALONE, by GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA.

*The Right of Translating Articles from ALL THE YEAR ROUND is reserved by the Authors.*